

MICROFILMED—1975



ELMUS OUTRAMUS S.T.P.
S.^h Petri apud Westmonasteriensis
Canonicus.

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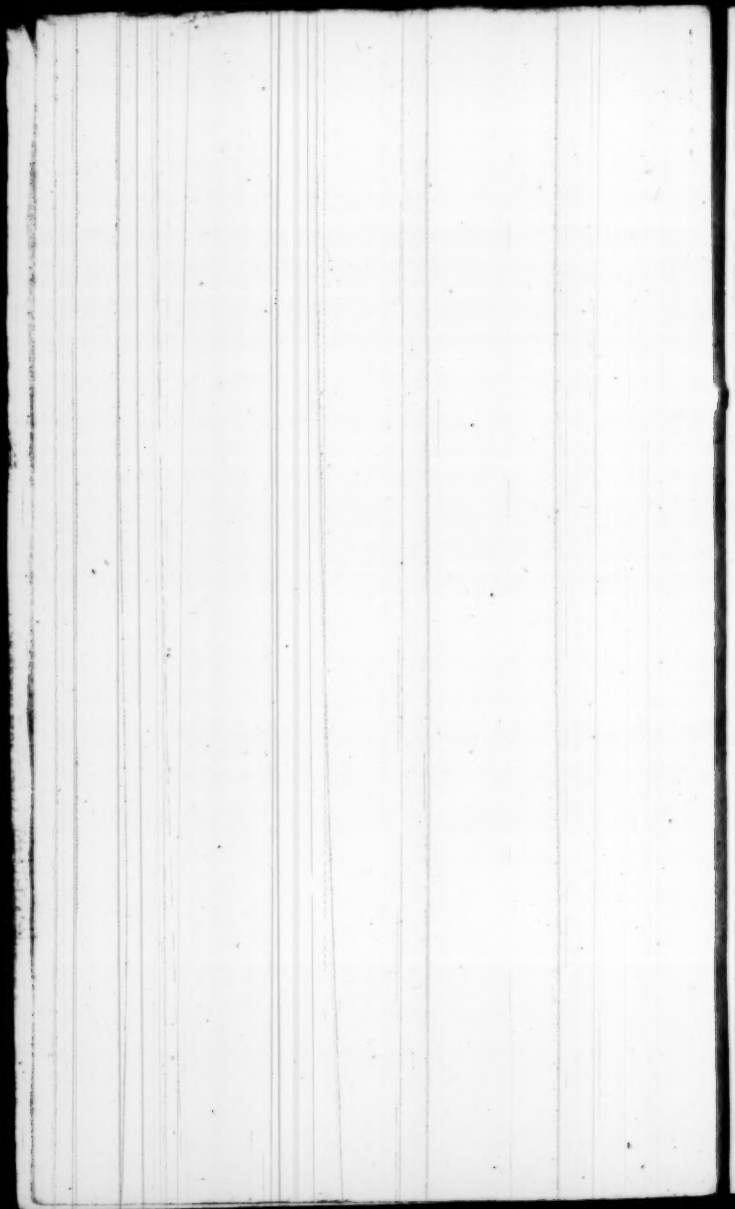
TWENTY
SERMONS

PREACHED upon
Several Occasions.

BY
WILLIAM OWTRAM D.D.
Prebendary of *Westminster*, and one
of his MAJESTIES Chaplains in
Ordinary.

Printed after the Authors own Copies.

LONDON,
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TO THE
READER.

Reader,

IT is well known that the Author of these following Sermons could never be prevailed upon, either by the Intreaty of his Friends, or the Authority of his Superiours (though very much urged by both) to publish any of his Sermons in Print; and his nearest Relations would have paid that respect to him in this, as in all other things, to have denied them to the Publick, for the sake of his own Judgment in this matter, had not a forward Bookseller, only to serve the ends of his own profit, thrust out into the World Six Sermons under his name, not many Months after his

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Death.

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To the Reader.

Death. To promote the Sale of which, he indeavours, in an Epistle before them, to make the Reader believe that although (as he confesses) they were taken from the Author by a Short-hand-man many years since, yet they were allowed and corrected by himself; That they were agreeable to his sense; And that there was no other more perfect Copy to be procured.

If all this had been true, What right had the Bookseller, and his Short-hand Friend by this to publish them in the name of this Author? Did the Author Correct them for the Press? Or is it sufficient to justify the publishing of such Discourses under a Mans name, because they are agreeable to his sense? Or if no other Copy could be procured, was it therefore necessary to publish this?

But this pretence was so far from being true, that whosoever has been abused

To the Reader.

abused by this Publisher so much as to buy, and look into those Sermons, will find, that they are so far from being Corrected by the Hand of this Author, that they were never Corrected by any; That they are so far from being agreeable to his sense, that in very many places they are no sense at all; And the Publisher knows very well that he never inquired of any of the Authors Relations for any Copies or Papers remaining in their hands.

If he had, he might have been shewed Three Sermons upon the first Text, Heb. 10. 38. whereas he has published but Two of them, and those two put together as one, and that so imperfect, so incoherent, and so ungrammatical, that the Reader must be very kind if he would excuse the Author in many places as well as the Printer. One might point to mistakes in almost every Page, some of which are very

To the Reader.

absurd and intolerable: But in regard some Friends of the Authors have thought fit to collect a Volume of his Sermons upon Theological Subjects (amongst which it will be most proper to insert these upon the 10th of the Hebrews concerning the Life of Faith in connection with other Discourses of Faith) it is sufficient to acquaint the Reader, that these shall be reprinted after the Authors own Copy.

*In like manner the Publisher, if he had consulted the Authors Friends, might have seen that the Second and Third Sermons of Providence upon St. Matt. 10. 29. are but a part of his Discourses upon that Subject, which it will be most proper to put together, and publish (if at all) in a Volume of the Attributes of God, upon which the Author has several Sermons: But besides that, these are but a part of his Meditations upon Providence, they are also very broken and imperfect in
many*

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many places, though the Short-hand-man has endeavoured, according to his skill in Divinity, to supply and fill them up.

Of the three following, two of them cannot yet be found amongst the Authors Papers, so that it is very doubtful whether they be his or no; and therefore the Publisher, besides the wrong he has done the Author, and the World too, in exposing his labours imperfectly, has also (very probably) fathered upon him those that are none of his. The just indignation which the Authors Friends have taken to this injurious dealing of the Publisher, together with Reports brought frequently to their ears of a design of other persons to publish other of his Sermons, inclined them (though they are sensible against the Authors own opinion) to set forth a Volume at present according to his own Copies: And these Twenty being lately preached upon particular

To the Reader.

occasions, and some of them in the most august and solemn Audience, and all of them designed to obviate the evils of the Age, and to secure Men in the belief and practice of the true Religion, are thought not improper to be first offered to the publick view.

The Author was sensible by what Artifices, what degrees, and what parties of Men, this most excellent constitution of the Church of England is endeavoured to be undermined; and denying to no Man the liberty of Disquisition and Discourse, he understood the strength both of their Arguments and their Interest: And the Reader may discern by these Sermons that he apprehended our danger to arise of late from (a confederacy, it may be, one cannot say but) a complication of enemies, Papists, Libertines, and Dissenters; but chiefly from the first, who imploy the two latter to work under them, and to weaken the Church
of

To the Reader.

of England, one by Prophaneness and the other by Separation, that so they may argue against the sufficiency of our constitution to maintain good Life, and preserve Unity, and dispose those who are of no Religion and no Church to become Profelytes to theirs. Amongst the Libertines may be reckoned that sort of Men who, though indeed they have natural conviction of a supreme Being, pretend to more wit than to be satisfied with the Authority of our Blessed Saviour; and so because they have no good opinion of the Truth of his Religion, they neglect Religion in general: for what Theist was ever known to live according to the Principles of natural Religion, to which notwithstanding he owns himself obliged? For the Dissenters, they have many different Opinions amongst themselves, some of which are here taken notice of, either ex proposito in some Sermons, or by the by in others.

To the Reader.

So that the whole Collection is an Antidote very seasonable for the malignity of the Age, and, by the blessing of God, may have some profitable effect from the Press; as, by the testimony of the Hearers, they had from the Pulpit; and they are offered to the world for that end; not as a Character of the great abilities of the Author, and his great Accomplishments in almost all kinds of Science, but as an instance of his Zeal for the Truth, and goodness of the Christian Religion in general, and the Church of England in particular; especially in this juncture.

His extraordinary skill in Rabbinical Learning, and the use and service of it to the Confirmation and Illustration of the Christian Theology, he has made appear to the learned World some years since with great propriety and accuracy of style in his Book De Sacrificiis: wherein he hath
also

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also given a proof of his profound skill in the highest points of the Divine Wisdom.

But what his abilities were in other parts both of Divine and Humane Knowledge, he had not leisure enough, from his Ministerial labours, to let the world know. Nor have I ability to make it sensible how great they were; or to represent the Gravity, Sobriety, Simplicity, Truth and plainness of his Conversation; his Devotion to God; and his Charity to the Neighbourhood, especially the sick and afflicted; His indefatigable Industry in his private Studies, as well as in the publick offices of his Profession, and his readiness to impart and communicate the effects of his mighty pains and industry to his Friends; His Civility, and Beneficence to Learned Foreigners; His Respect and Reverence to his Superiors; together with his Humility and Candor to his Equals

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quals and Inferiors : Which excellent Vertues as they rendred him very valuable and useful to the world whilst he was alive, so they will imbalm his memory now he is dead.

All that needs further to be added is to beg thy pardon, Reader, for the Errata of the Press, which are too many, and to desire that if a Sermon of the Authors upon the Sin against the Holy Ghost, or any other, be in thine or any other hand that thou knowest, thou would please to restore, or send notice of it to the Printer, that it may be inserted in another Collection.

TEXTS

TEXTS

OF THE

SERMONS.

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I John iij. 7. *Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteousness is Righteous, even as he is Righteous.* fol. 390. 411

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SERMON XX.

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The



The First Sermon.

ISAIAH 33. 6.

*And wisdom and knowledge shall be
the stability of thy times.*

The whole verse is thus :

*And wisdom and knowledge shall be the
stability of thy times, and strength
of salvation : The fear of the Lord
is his Treasure.*

Although the effects of the great calamities which we have suffered in this Nation, namely, those of a raging Pestilence, a devouring Fire, several grievous and bloody Wars, be in some measure now removed, yet were the minds and thoughts of men never more disturbed, or more uneasy than now they are. The reason hereof seems especially to be this, namely,

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ly, that most desperate Plot, which was designed to murder our Prince, and to overthrow our Laws, our Liberties, our Religion, our Spiritual, as well as our Temporal welfare. This, and the fears that it hath awakened sit so close upon mens hearts, and give such sensible apprehensions of future troubles and calamities, that we enjoy not what we have, we find no ease or satisfaction in any thing which we as yet possess. We have indeed a Peace at present, but it is unsettled and uncertain; we have a Religion and that reformed according to the word of God, but it is dangerously undermined. We have good Laws to preserve our Liberties and just Rights, but know not how long we may retain them: we have a good and fruitful Land, but are not without all apprehensions of dispossession, or at least of great disturbance in it. Which things being so, it should seem our present fears and troubles arise not so much from the sense of any present want, as from the uncertainty of what we have; not from the evils we feel at present, but those we fear may fall upon us, that is to say, from the *instability of the times.*

This

This was the thing which cast my thoughts upon the words I have now read, and made them seem to be suitable to the present occasion. Now these seem to have been delivered after *Sennacherib* had spoiled *Hezekiah* of his treasures to make conditions of Peace with him, but before his Army made its approaches toward *Jerusalem*, which it seems it did in a little time after the making of that Peace, as may appear 2 *Kings* 18. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Which false dealing of *Sennacherib* is noted and censured by the Prophet in the beginning of this Chapter, *Isaiah* 33. 1. *Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled, and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee.* The case in short seems to be thus. *Sennacherib* had invaded *Judah*, assaulted and taken the fenced cities as it is recorded 2 *Kings* 18. 13. He so distressed both *Hezekiah*, and his people, that he freely offered to submit to what conditions, *Sennacherib* would please to impose upon him, *Return from me, says Hezekiah, and that which thou puttest on me I will bear, v.* 14. These conditions were so hard (being no less than three hundred talents of Silver, and thirty talents of Gold)

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that he was constrained to make them good, by giving *Sennacherib* as well the treasures of the Temple, all the *Silver found in the House of the Lord*, as the treasures of his own House, and what was still more dishonourable, *to cut off the Gold from the Doors of the Temple*, and the *Pillars* which he himself had made, v. 15 16.

Yet such it should seem was *Sennacherib's* treachery and false dealing, that having, as was before related, spoiled *Hezekiah* of his treasure, he presently, contrary to his promise, sends up an Army towards *Jerusalem*, the dread whereof filled that City with great amazement and confusions. In these confusions had the Prophet *Isaiab* an intimation, that God would exalt his mighty power in the deliverance of *Hezekiah*, and of the City of *Jerusalem* from these so great and imminent dangers, and also confirm the same deliverance, and give secure and settled times. The former whereof the Prophet declares v. 5. *The Lord is exalted, for he dwelleth on high, he hath filled Sion with judgment and righteousness*; the latter in the following words, *And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times*. Stability signifies strength, and settlement; sta-
bility

The First Sermon.

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bility of times, safe, secure and certain times, times not so lyable unto change, as that the fear of domestick Troubles, or foreign violence, should either disquiet the minds of men, or interrupt them in their duties to God, or their neighbours, or themselves.

And then that *wisdom*, or that *knowledge*, by which the times should be thus established, is the knowledge of God and of his will, and hearty obedience thereunto, in the whole compass of his Laws, as well of those which prescribe our duties to one another, as of those that direct us in Gods worship. I need not say, that this is the sense, wherein wisdom is frequently taken in the Scriptures; for that's a thing that all acknowledge, who pretend to any skill in them: nor need I labour much to prove, that this is the sense of *wisdom* and *knowledge* in the words which I now insist upon; for plain it is, that what the Prophet styles *judgment and righteousness* in the words immediately antecedent, is here stiled *wisdom* and *knowledge*. *He hath filled Sion with judgment and righteousness*. So he speaks in the fifth verse, and then immediately adds the effect those things should have, under the name of

The First Sermon.

and *knowledge* ; for so it follows, *and wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times* , that is to say, *judgment and righteousness* shall be so. He varies the words, but not the sense, for then his discourse would not be coherent. Add hereunto, that what he had stiled *wisdom and knowledge* in the beginning of the verse, is immediately called *the fear of the Lord* ; *wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times* , and *strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure*. Where he suggests that although Sennacherib had spoiled Hezekiah of his treasures, which are the usual nerves of War, and the common instruments of defence ; yet that he had such a treasure still, namely, the fear of the true God, as should give *stability to his times*. For as much as this is the truest wisdom, and such wisdom the firmest foundation of peace and settlement. This reaches all the ends of wisdom, and therefore justly bears its name. So that the sense of the words in hand is the same with that of those before, chap. 32. v. 17. *The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever*.

Now

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Now the words taken in this sense offer two things to our consideration.

1. The former whereof is a blessing promised, which is *stability of the times*, settled, quiet, and easie days.

2. The latter the proper means or terms, whereby this blessing is procur'd, which is obedience to Gods will in the whole extent of his holy Laws, styled by the Prophet *wisdom and knowledge*. For so he speaks to *Hezekiah*, and in his person to the nation, *wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times*.

I shall begin with the blessing promised, which is *stability in the times*, a singular blessing to a Nation being such as most effectually tends, or is at the least wholly necessary to the producing of all others, whether we consider it with relation

1. To the advantages of this World.

2. Or those that concern a better life.

Of the former of these I should not speak, being not so suitable to this place, were it not proper for the occasion, were it not seasonable in point of time, and now, if ever, to be considered, when the great Council of the Land is studying how to settle the Nation, to confirm our Peace, to establish true and

firm foundations of future settlement and tranquillity ; and may expect to have an account of the usefulness of their undertakings opened and laid before the People. But being these are our present circumstances, I judge I may justly take occasion to insist a while upon those advantages, which every Nation may expect from quiet, certain, and stable times.

1. And first of all, such times as these give ease of heart, vigour of mind, a free and chearful and active spirit, take off the weights of fear and sorrow, that troublesome times generally hang upon men's minds, and so prepare and dispose to diligence, and give encouragement thereunto, by promising good success in it. For in such times may every person duly hope to reap the fruits of his own Labours, to gain advantage by his diligence, to find an account in his undertakings, he now believes that he serves himself, or his posterity, which he values equally with himself. And this, as it gives a great encouragement to his diligence: So it sweetens the labours that attend it, and makes him easie to himself, as well as useful to publick ends. It is not so in troublesome
and

and distracted times. In such times every man suspects that one may sow, and another reap, one may build, and another inhabit, one may plant, and another probably gather the fruit; as we have seen in our own age, and many felt by sad experience. And this is a very great discouragement to every man's diligence in his calling. Where is the man that will toyle and labour, weary his body or his mind, where he cannot hope that he or his heirs shall find advantage by all his pains; who will imploy and busie himself at all adventures? build, or plant, or lay up treasure, when he hath reason to suspect, that he is labouring for a stranger, or preparing rich, and pleasant spoils for an enemy to feed his lusts upon? And what's the effect of these discouragements, but a disconsolate, useles floath, or else a diversion from those labours, whereby he might profit himself and others, to live by spoyl on other persons? which when it once becomes common, ends in general want and poverty, and brings destruction upon a Nation. So useful, nay so wholly necessary are stable times to give encouragement to care and diligence in those labours, whereby
every

every man serves himself, as the publick good is served by all.

2. Stable and settled times give men the happiest opportunities of injoying the fruits of their own endeavours and Gods blessings in peace and quiet and tranquillity, without which nothing is enjoyed, but often become the greatest burdens. Honour it self becomes contemptible, and merit exposes to reproach in popular tumults and seditions. So the Prophet suggests to us, *Isaiab 3. 5. The people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the antient, and the base against the honourable.*

What advantages are large fortunes, when they are so far from giving security to the owners, that they expose them to spoyl and rapine; when the fear of losing them gives more trouble, than the possession gives content? which is the case in unsetled times.

And lastly what satisfaction is it to have a numerous and hopeful issue, when a mans children are in danger to have their minds abused by error, by Popery, Atheism, or Infidelity, and their bodies enslaved by a cruel tyranny? So far are any of these things from being comforts
in

in such an age, that they then create the greatest troubles.

Now therefore happy are those days, those fixed, and certain, and stable times, when every man may enjoy himself, enjoy his friends, possess his estate in peace and quiet, without the dread of domestick troubles, or foreign enemies, when there is no fear of plots at home, or of a *Sennacherib* from abroad to interrupt the enjoyment of them.

3. Quiet and settled times discourage ill designing men from attempting seditions and commotions. They leave no ground for the lusts of men to hope to prosper in ill designs, no expectation of success, and therefore either remove the lusts, or put a restraint and check upon them. Whereas unstable and unsettled times are an open Theatre for mens lusts to appear, and act their designs upon. Then is every mans Pride encouraged to endeavour advancement by any means, good or evil, it makes no matter; every mans avarice put in hope of making spoils upon his neighbour; and every mans private animosity of taking revenge upon his enemy. Here is a door set wide open to all inordinate lusts and passions, which presently

sently hatch and produce confusions, and in these confusions he that speaks loudest is best heard, and most believed, though neither the best, nor wisest man, from whence it generally comes to pass, that the ill designs which were conceived in unsetled times break out at last in wars and tumults, and end in ruine and delolation. And therefore happy are those assured and settled times, wherein there is no occasion given for the lusts of men, for Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition, whether in domestick, or foreign enemies, so much as to hope to make a change, to shake the foundations of peace and righteousness, and therefore consequently no encouragement to attempt it. For plain it is that such times are of mighty moment and importance to all the advantages of this World.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that they are of great importance also in order to those that are far greater, that is to say, to those that concern the life to come.

'Tis true indeed the greatest stability of the times, the firmest settlement of affairs is not of it self a certain cause of faith, and piety, truth and righteousness,

ness, and of the flourishing of Religion. But yet it is such a cause hereof, that religion cannot flourish without it. It gives the happiest opportunities for the free and quiet practice of it. And this is the ground of the exhortations of St. Paul, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet, and a peaceable life in all Godliness and Honesty.* He takes for granted, that Gods blessing upon *Kings* and those that are in Authority is the great cause of peace and quiet, and then again, that peace and quiet are the most happy opportunities for the exercise both of *Godliness* and *Honesty*, that is to say, of all our duties to God and Men. Unquiet times are apt to distract and disturb our minds, to create many confusions in them, whereas all the duties of religion are then performed with the greatest pleasure to our selves, and best acceptance unto God also, when he is served without distraction.

Unsettled days divert the minds and thoughts of men from the consideration

on of things to come in a better World, to secure their affairs, to preserve their concernments here on earth, which seem to be in present danger. In such days is every man apt to think with himself, how he may provide against that storm which seems just ready to fall upon him; how he may secure his life and fortune, preserve his Family, help his Friends, or escape his Enemies, and this generally in great distraction and trouble of mind; and in the midst of these confusions his thoughts are scattered, his mind disordered, and loses those divine affections, which give our prayers the best success both upon God, and upon our selves.

To this I might add, that unsettled times, being, as was before discoursed, the most encouraging opportunities to excite the inordinate lusts of men, Pride, and Avarice, and Animosity are apt to destroy mutual Charity, mutual confidence amongst men, to leave them jealous one of another, and so to extinguish the true Spirit of Christianity.

How blessed therefore are those days, those fixed and stable and settled times, which nourish Charity, produce peace, and make men easie each to other?

When

When every vertuous and pious person may make his addresses unto God with fixed attention, with stedfast thoughts and with pure affections; when he may pray for what he wants, and render his thanks for what he enjoys, without interruption and distraction either by his own fears and sorrows, or from the lusts of other men. When God, to speak in the words of *Zachary*, grants unto us that we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

2. Having thus given you a short account what a singular blessing it is to men to live in stable and settled times, let us now proceed to the second general, where we are to consider the proper methods, whereby this blessing may be procured, that is to say, the times established. Those, says the Prophet, are *wisdom* and *knowledge*; and these in the language of the Scriptures are due obedience to Gods will in the whole extent of those duties, which every man owes to God, and his Neighbour.

Perhaps you may think that this is a poor and mean expedient to give establishment to the times. You rather judge that

that secular Wisdom, humane Policy; the projects of subtile and crafty men; are the only way to settle a Nation, and to give security to the times. And true it is, these may shift and patch up things for a little while; they may serve a turn, and put off a danger for the present: But sure I am, that no Policies, no Devices of humane Wisdom, can ever lay any firm foundations of peace and settlement without the establishment of true Religion, both as it relates to God and men. All other methods whatsoever leave the foundation weak and ruinous, though the superstructure may be specious, and carry a face of strength and beauty. He that made the World, and now governs it by his Providence, hath so contrived the nature of things, that they can never be firmly settled without the practice of truth and righteousness, but may by these be strongly settled. As will appear if we consider that these things are,

1. First of all the natural causes of Peace and Settlement.

2. And then secondly, that they procure the especial aids of divine Providence, to give a greater success to them, to strengthen, and render them more effectual.

I. I shall

1. I shall begin with the former of these, and shew that the practice of true Religion, as it respects both God and men, is a natural cause of peace and settlement: For so it is in two respects,

1. As it renders every person secure and easie in his station; so it prevents intestine Troubles and Seditions.

2. As it produces strength; so it secures from foreign Enemies.

1. It renders every person secure and easie in his station, and so it prevents intestine Troubles. These arise from mutual injuries, and these injuries from mens unreasonable lusts and passions, which Christianity would destroy. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members? ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain, ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because you ask not; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* He speaks of the Jews in the lesser Asia, and it may be, of some Judaizing Christians mingled with them, who destroyed and ruined one another by mutual slaughters amongst themselves, arising

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rising from their inordinate lusts. They were full of Avarice, and Sensuality, swell'd with Ambition and Animosity, and these created mutual injuries, and oppressions, and these oppressions wars and tumults amongst themselves.

But blessed and happy are that people, who unanimously live in the fear of God, and practise justice, and mutual charity amongst themselves. They enjoy themselves, and God's blessings in peace, and quiet, neither designing nor fearing evil amongst themselves; and this gives settlement to the whole by the ease it gives to every private and single person. When no man is himself oppressed, nor hath any desire to oppress another; when every man is just to every other, when charity is added unto justice, and supplies the wants of such persons, as are not able to help themselves; when every man finds his life secure, his fortunes safe, his name unblemished; when he finds that every man is his friend, and himself is so to every other, then is his condition easie to him; and who will attempt to make a change, to promote confusions and seditions, when he finds every man easie to him, and himself easie unto himself?

Nor

Nor would these errors and mistakes that will attend humane frailty, while we continue here on earth, considerably alter the case before us: For the mutual mistakes and inconveniences, which arise meerly from infirmity, are neither wilful, nor pernicious, nor of long continuance; and would readily be repair'd on one hand, and easily pardoned on the other, if there were Sincerity of Religion, although attended with imperfection; that is to say, if Christianity were so practised, as every man may and ought to practise it, even with the alloy of humane frailty, and the disadvantages that attend it. Now if what I have said be so clear and evident, that it cannot reasonably be contradicted, the consequence necessarily must be this, That the fear of God, and love of Righteousness, the general practice of Christianity would naturally render every person easie both to himself and others, and give *establishment to the times*, so far as this could be effected by preventing all intestine troubles.

2. Let us add to this in the second place, that it would also produce strength, encrease the power of any people, and

by so doing greatly contribute to their security from foreign Enemies.

Strength most certainly it would produce, for it would unite men amongst themselves in the bands of mutual love, and charity. It would give them confidence in one another; it would animate them with the same mind, diffuse the same spirit into them, possess them all with a publick spirit, and join their counsels and endeavours for the defence of publick welfare. And would not this be a great security against all Enemies from abroad?

Nor would Religion unite them only among themselves, but it would also encrease their treasure, and make preparation of all those aids, that publick occasions might require for their defence against foreign Enemies. What hath consumed the wealth and treasure of this Nation, but Pride, and Luxury, and Sensuality? and what can encrease the same again, but the Reformation of those vices by sobriety, temperance, and frugality? which are as truly Christian virtues, and as real parts of true Religion, when practised in the fear of God, as any other Virtues whatsoever.

Nor must I omit to put you in mind,
what

what courage it would produce amongst us, to find our selves firmly united amongst our selves, to find our Virtues increase our wealth, and to give a sufficient stable fund to make preparation against an Enemy : and how would this courage be heightened , if we were conscious to our selves, that we were a people fearing God, and loving righteousness? For then we should easily be perswaded to believe that God would give us assistance in all our straits, that he would defend us against our Enemies; that he, who is just, and true, and righteous, would defend a just, and a righteous people.

2. Which leads me to the second method, whereby the practice of Religion in its whole extent to God and men, would give stability to the times ; and that is, by procuring the aids of Divine Providence, and by engaging the Power of God to give security to that people by whom he is faithfully served, and honoured.

The whole History of the Jewish Nation is little else but an account how God Almighty raised or depressed , blessed or punished that people, according to the various instances of their obedience

bedience, or disobedience. When they provoked him to displeasure by the iniquities of their lives, he forsook, and abandon'd them to themselves: when they repented of their sins, and humbly returned unto him again, he then delivered them from their Enemies, and that many times, when their deliverance was beyond the power of second causes.

This was the case in the very days of *Hezekiah*, which the prophet *Isaiah* had in his eye, when he delivered the words before us. *Salmanasar* had not long before invaded, and conquered the *ten Tribes*, and carried them away into Captivity. *Sennacherib* had now made an attempt on the *other two*, he had besieged, assaulted, and taken several of their fenced Cities: He had so straitened *Hezekiah*, that he was forced to buy his peace, or rather a false appearance of it, by surrendering all his treasures to him. For afterwards his Army marches toward *Jerusalem*; the approach whereof was so dreadful, that it fill'd the City with great amazements and consternations. Yet in the midst of these confusions, in these unsettled and shaken times did God assure that pious King, that he would establish him in his

his Throne, and give him stable and settled times. *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times:* and he made good what he promised to him by the slaughter of *Sennacherib's* Army by an invisible Power from Heaven, *Isaiah 37. 36.* So great is the faithfulness of Gods Providence over righteous and holy Princes, and Nations; so great his care to give encouragement to Piety, Righteousness, and Sobriety, when they are faithfully and duly practised.

I do not say, but that unrighteous Nations also may thrive and flourish for a time; for I know that God uses the power of one unrighteous and wicked people to punish and to destroy another. But this is done, when both are wicked and ill-deserving; to which I add, that when the one hath done Gods work upon the other, when the strong hath eaten up the weak, the strong it self either becomes a spoil and prey to another stronger than it self (as the *Assyrians* did to the *Persians*, and as the *Persians* to the *Greeks*, and the *Greeks* themselves unto the *Romans*, and the *Romans* to the *Goths* and *Vandals*) or else is crumbled and broke to pieces by intestine
C 4 factions

factions and seditions as the Christian Empire in the East, which made it a prey to the *Turks* and *Saracens*.

In the mean time, allowing the fall and desolation of one unrighteous and sinful Nation by the unrighteousness of another; yet will not this afford any argument to conclude that a faithful, righteous, and holy people shall find no aids from Divine Providence to secure them from a wicked Enemy, although more powerful than themselves.

Having thus shewed that Piety, and Vertue, Truth and Righteousness compose the disorders, settle the affairs, confirm the peace, and strength of Nations, and gain stability to the times, let us now reflect upon this discourse, and so apply it to our selves.

I. And first of all hence we learn, what hath disquieted, what hath unsettled our own times, and made them troublesome and uneasie. We have not studied what the Prophet stiles *wisdom* and *knowledge*, we have not lived in the fear of God, and Christian Charity each to other; and the want of these hath hindered the settlement of our days, and the vices quite contrary to them
made

made them troublesome and unstable.

I need not say, that our Vanity, Luxury, and Prodigality have impoverished us to a great degree, and poverty created discontents, and made us uneasy and unquiet. I need not take any pains to prove that our Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition have caused and fomented mutual enmities amongst our selves, and that these have disordered and unsettled us. But that which I cannot forbear to mention, and something larger to consider, is the monstrous Atheism, and Infidelity, that have secretly taken root amongst us, and fill'd the land with strange prophaneness, with contempt of Piety and Religion, nay scorn of the very profession of it; and that to such prodigious measures, as were never known in former ages of Christianity.

And can we wonder that our condition is so unsettled, that our affairs are so uncertain, while the very foundations of all true peace are so much shaken, and undermin'd?

Perhaps you may think it very strange that Popery should ever have adventured to lift up its head in this Nation; that a Religion expressly contrary
to

to the holy Scriptures, contrary to all Christian Antiquity, contrary to natural light and reason, disagreeable to our very senses in the strange fiction of transubstantiation; a Religion contrary to our Interests, that would enslave our minds and bodies both at once, and was upon all these accounts justly abandoned by our Ancestors, should ever attempt to return upon us. But this will not appear so strange, if we consider how much Atheism, and Infidelity, how much profaneness and scorn of piety, how many divisions among our selves, how many dangerous Schisms and Heresies have infected and overflowed the Nation: for how could it be, but that these evils must give a very great encouragement to Popish Emissaries, and Seducers to conspire the destruction of Religion? They know that they who have no Religion (and many such there be amongst us) by being such are prepared for any; that all Religions are alike to them that are of none at all. Upon this account I make no doubt but that they themselves have greatly laboured to open a door to all vices, all profaneness, and immorality, that so Popery might creep in with that profane
and

and wicked Spirit, which themselves had spread, and diffused amongst us.

Moreover, is it not most apparent, that they have put on all shapes, and dressed up themselves in all the disguises of the several parties in the Nation, the more to divide us amongst our selves, and to make us odious one to another, as well as ridiculous to our neighbours? that so being weary of these confusions among our selves, and despicable by our rents and factions, we might at length consent to settlement on their foundations, and rather chuse to be at rest by being reconciled to them, than still divided and rent in pieces by infinite factions amongst our selves. If things be thus as I fear they are, I need not say what that is, which hath given us unstable times. We have undermined our own foundations by our profaneness, and irreligion; we have not studied that *wisdom*, that would have given us stable times.

2. Seeing *wisdom* and *knowledge*, seeing the true fear of God, and hearty obedience to his Laws are the expedients the Prophet offers to give *stability to the times*, hence we learn what is the true and proper method to gain that

that blessing amongst our selves.

The practice of these two plain commands, which enjoin us, To love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbours as our selves, would give us stable and quiet times, give us peaceable and easie days, procure us rest and peace, and order, after all our labours and confusions. These would certainly do the thing, that no wisdom, power, or policy can ever possibly effect without them.

Can a Nation be wasted and exhausted by its own riot and prodigality, and not be exposed to a foreign Enemy? or can a Nation be so exposed, and enjoy a secure and settled Peace? Can the members of the same Society live in mutual hatred and animosity, arising from Avarice and Ambition, and yet enjoy quiet, and certain, and easie days?

The wisdom of God hath so contrived the very nature of things themselves, that peace and war, strength and weakness, health and sickness are as consistent each with other, as quiet times with restless lusts, peace with wickedness and irreligion. *The wicked are like a troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, there is no*
peace

peace saith my God to the wicked. Isaiah 57.

20, 21. Sin is uneasie to it self, a constant disease, a daily vexation to the sinner; and it is so to a Nation likewise, when it is national and universal. And sure it is one of the greatest vanities to hope that God should preserve by miracle, where people wilfully serve those lusts, which naturally work their own destruction. Whensoever providence works a miracle to preserve a person or a Nation, it is to preserve those that cannot; not those that will not preserve themselves, but wilfully rush upon their ruine.

But is there any man in the world that wilfully studies his own destruction? do we not all wish, and long for such stability in the times, as may give use easie and quiet minds, secure our Affairs, succeed our labours, confirm our strength, and deliver us from all those fears and dreads, that have given us so much pain and sorrow?

I make no doubt but that we do desire such days with all our hearts. I make no question but there are many of such a Spirit, that they would willingly undertake the greatest labours to procure them. I do not question but that the generality of the Nation, if they

they were assaulted by an Enemy, would hazard their fortunes, expose their lives, adventure what was dearest to them, to maintain their ancient rights, and liberties. And would it not be as easie for us, and more efficacious to these ends, to reform our lives, to forsake our sins, and turn from the evil of our ways? Why should a man be willing to spill his very blood, and unwilling to reform his sins for the security of his Country? Why are we willing to use those means, that are more grievous and less effectual for our welfare, namely to hazard life and fortune for securing these very things themselves, and neglect the easie and efficacious, the reformation of our lives? Would it be a burden to love God with all our hearts, to place our hope and trust in him, to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all our days? Would it be troublesome and uneasie, to love our neighbours with sincerity, and to be so beloved by them; to be freed from mutual fears and jealousies, from all animosities each to other?

O how blind are the minds of men not to see the things that concern their
peace,

peace, not to observe that Christs commands are a light, an easie, a gentle yoke! but rather to ~~study their own~~ security by ~~those very things that o~~ verthrow it, by fraud, or violence, or worldly craft, than by the practice of those virtues, which would ease their minds, secure their fortunes, succeed their labours, and make them happy as well in the life that now is, as in that to come.

How blessed and happy might we be, if we would follow Gods directions! how easily might we spend our days even in this frail and mortal life, how firmly might we settle the times, which are now so wavering and uncertain, if we would spend but half that time in the subduing of our lusts, that we do in the gratification of them; if we would but take half that pains to possess our hearts with love to God, and mutual Charity each to other, and in fervent Prayers, in humble thanksgivings, in Holiness, Righteousness, and Sobriety, that we do in the service of our lusts? This would undoubtedly amend the days, settle our Interests, and bless us with quiet and stable times. This would be a fair return to God Almighty for the

the favour which we now commemo-
rate, for restoring our Prince, our Law
and Religion after we were deprived
of them by former Ruines and Confu-
sions.

Thus God of his mercy open our
eyes, that we may timely understand
and practise the things that concern our
peace: then should there be no breaking
in, nor going out, no complaining in our
streets, and happy is that people that is
in such a case: yea happy is that people
whose God is the Lord. Psal. 144. 14.

15.

God of his mercy grant. &c.

The



The Second Sermon.

PSALM 68. 28.

*Strengthen, O God, that which thou
hast wrought for us.*

The whole verse is thus :

*Thy God hath commanded thy strength :
Strengthen, O God, that which
thou hast wrought for us.*

THIS Psalm, as judicious men conceive, was written by *David*, when he removed the Ark of God from the house of *Obed-Edom* to *Sion*. Which may be the reason, why it begins with these words, which *Moses* used on the like occasions; namely, when he removed the same *Ark*; which are recorded *Numb. 10. 35. Rise up Lord, and let thine Enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* So *David* here in the first
D verse,

verse, *Let God arise, and let his Enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him flee before him.* And having lived to see the day wherein the holy Ark of God, the Symbol of his especial presence, was to be fixed in its own place, which God himself had chosen for it, he thought it meet to recollect the many other favours and mercies, which God had granted the Jewish Nation, and to render him hearty thanks for them; namely, for his singular Providence in conducting the People thorough the Wilderness, after their deliverance out of *Egypt.* 6, 7, 8. verses. for his planting them in the promised land, a land flowing with Milk and Hony, and fruitful even to a miracle, so at the *ninth* and *tenth* verses; for the powerful Aids of his gracious Providence in dispossessing the former Inhabitants, in scattering the Armies of their Kings, that his people might possess their Countries, 12, 13, 14.

And having then in the following verses largely returned his thanks to God for all the great and admirable things, which he had wrought for the Jewish Nation, in order to their strength and settlement, he prays for the continuance of
his

his favour; and of their present peace and welfare, *Strengthen O God what thou hast wrought for us.* In which words you may observe these two generals.

1. An acknowledgement made to God that it was he (and he alone) who had planted and settled them in the land, and wrought those great and mighty works, whereby they were planted and settled in it. Whath hath been done, saith he, *hast wrought for us.*

2. An ardent Prayer to God to strengthen, that is, to continue what he had pleased to work for them, *Strengthen O God that which thou hast wrought for us.*

1. I begin with the first, which is the acknowledgement made to God, that it was he, who had planted and settled them in the land, and wrought those great and mighty works, whereby they were planted and settled in it: where I must not omit to take some notice that divine Providence concerns it self in the Administration, Rule, and Government of the affairs of mankind.

Which though it be a general subject, yet must I stay a while upon it, because the truth of this one thing is the

very foundation of all Religion, and more especially of that particular part of it, which we are to exercise at this time, which is, to render our thanks to God for restoring our lawful Prince to us, and the blessings attending his Restitution, namely, our *Religion, Laws,* and *Liberties*. If this was not done by Divine Providence, it would be flattery or mistake to return any thanks to God for it; but if it was, as it was indeed, then to neglect to praise him for it, would be a Sacrilegious ingratitude.

Now therefore let us a while reflect upon the Arguments and Demonstrations that make it evident there is a Providence, that is, that God concerns himself, and interposes his power and wisdom in the Administration of humane affairs, and all the concernments in the World.

1. And first of all, had we no more than the light of nature to give us assurance that this is so, even that might effectually serve to do it. That very light evidently shews that there is a God who made the World, and all the Creatures therein contained, from the admirable structure and contrivance, clearly appearing in he whole,

whole, and every part thereof. And such are the works of Gods Creation, as evidently shew an infinite wisdom, power, and bounty in him that is the Author of them; and there is nothing more unreasonable, than to imagine that infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, either cannot, or will not interpose in the ordering of the affairs of men. No man will say he cannot do it, for this is against the natural notion of a God, and, is most evidently contradicted by what he hath already done in the Creation of the World, a work of infinite power and wisdom. And if any will say he will not do it, his reason necessarily must be this, namely, want of concernment in God for us, that is, want of kindness to us, the noblest works of his own hands, which is most evidently contradicted in the love already shewed to us, in that he hath not only made us, but provided all things needful for us, and given us infinitely great advantages over all the rest of his visible Creatures, and still continues all these favours; from whence it appears that there is nothing more unreasonable, than to imagine or suspect, that God either cannot, or that

he will not interpose in the administration of our affairs. It is no toyl to him to do it, his wisdom and power are never weary.

To do it, is suitable to that goodness which he hath already shewed unto us, and besides it is most extream folly to fancy that God would imploy an infinite power and wisdom in the Creation of the World, and then abandon it unto chance, and concern himself no further in it.

The same wisdom that could not but make it for an end, cannot but still pursue the end for which he made it, in the ordering, Rule, and Government of it. To act for no end argues folly; to cease to pursue an end propounded, evidently argues want of wisdom: from whence it appears that the wise God both had an end in the Creation of the World, and that he still pursues that end, by the Rule, and Government of his Providence.

2. Thus far speaks the light of nature, but now if we rise a degree higher, and take a view of Revelation made by God in his Holy Word, here we find express witness, and Authentick record of Gods Providence in the
rule

rule and Government of the World.

1. For first of all, God doth in most expresse Language own the Government of the World, assume and vindicate it to himself, *see now*, saith he, *that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.* Deuter. 32. 39. Whereunto add that of the Prophet, *I am God, and there is none else, I am God and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from antient times the things that are not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* Isaiah 46. 9, 10. From whence, observe, that God expressly declares himself to be the Governour of the World, assumes this as his proper right, and certainly God doth not declare himself to do what indeed he doth not, nor assumes what doth not belong to him.

2. And then further, as God himself expressly owns the Rule and Government of the World, so do all wise men ascribe it to him: *Thou even thou art Lord alone, saith Nehemiah, Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein,*

therein, the Seas and all, that is therein, and thou preservest them all. Nehem. 9. 6.

Where he ascribes as well the preservation, as the Creation of all to God; and certainly he did not design to flatter him by ascribing more than he did unto him.

3. And add hereunto the style and Title, wherein the Scriptures represent God. They style him Lord, and thereby own his right and title to the World. They style him King, and thereby own his Government of it. *The Lord is King for ever and ever, Psal. 10. 16. and the Lord sitteth King for ever, Psal. 29. 10.* Nay they expressly style him Governour, *the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is the Governour among the Nations, Psal. 22. 28.* and call upon the Nations to rejoyce under the righteousness of his reign. *O let the Nations be glad for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the Nations upon earth, Psal. 67. 4.*

Now so universal is Gods Providence that it is concerned in every Creature; in man, as bearing his own Image; in meaner Creatures, as made for man. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; and yet one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the ve-*

ry hairs of your head are numbered; fear not therefore for ye are of more value than many sparrows; Math. 10. 29.

So far doth God consider man, that he concerned is in all his actions; he commands, he assists, he rewards the good; he forbids, and punishes what is evil; and though he permit it to be done, though he do not irresistably hinder it, yet hath he an end in that permission, which is to bring good out of evil, and uses it for his own glory. This is the nature, this is the extent of Gods Providence, a thing so necessary to be believed, that all our Prayers, all our thanksgivings, all our obedience depend upon it. He that believes God will do nothing, hath no reason to pray for any thing. He that believes he hath done nothing, hath no reason to give him thanks. He that believes he is unconcerned in the good, or evil of mankind (as every man must that denys his providence) hath no reason to *love*, or *fear* him, that is, no reason to *obey* him.

But being, as we have now proved, God doth concern his power and wisdom in the administration of our affairs; hence we learn to own and acknowledge the hand of God in all our successes and
advan-

advantages, and to render him hearty thanks for them. *Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

They are words of God himself, *Psalms* 50. 15. wherein he requires a double acknowledgment of his Providence, first in making an address to him in all our difficulties, straits, and dangers; and then in the grateful return of praise for our deliverance out of trouble. This he requires as due unto him, this he challenges as debt, nor can it be denied unto him without ingratitude and injustice, and that which should so much the more perswade us to a cheerful thankfulness towards God for every mercy we receive, is because our hearty thanks and praises is all the return we can make to God, and because this is so easily made, prompted even by nature it self, and by the love we bear to our selves; and because that mercy is never well and duly used, that is not also thankfully received; and it were better to want the greatest and highest blessings, that can concern this present life, than to abuse, or not use them well. The former is but a calamity, the latter a very provoking sin; the former

former only troublesome to us, the latter dishonourable unto God.

And being we are so far concerned to make a return of thanks to God for every single and private favour, how much more for publick blessings? how much more for that so happy and gracious Providence, which calls us together at this time; the restitution of our Prince to the possession of his Throne, and to the exercise of that Government, which by inheritance belongs unto him.

You cannot expect that I should attempt, much less be able to give a perfect and full description of this so great a mercy to us, this is indeed beyond my purpose, because so much above my ability. But something of it may appear if we consider First, the great effects and issues of it; Secondly, the several difficulties and obstructions, that seemed to lie in the way to it; Thirdly and lastly, the manner wherein it was done.

1. If we consider it in its effects, these were not only the reestablishment of the Nation upon its antient Laws and Liberties, but of the true Reformed Religion, wherewith it had been
former-

formerly blessed by the infinite mercy of God to it : both very great and signal mercies.

I. We had been greatly oppressed and grieved by a long and violent Usurpation, we had been broken all to pieces, changed from one form to another, tossed and tumbled to and fro, those that oppressed us never finding a firm foundation to settle themselves or us upon ; no man could guess, no man conjecture the year before, either who should Govern the year following, or what kind of Government should be amongst us. Every year brought forth new Counsels, new Designs, and forms of Government, and so indeed was like to do, when we were beside the true foundation.

All this while whatsoever hands had power over us, wheresoever the Usurpation lay, the power was Arbitrary and unjust, oppressing and vexing where it pleased without controul and contradiction. To say no more the Counsels of those that ruled over us were foolish, tyrannous, and unstable. The folly of them made us ridiculous, the tyranny of them made us miserable, and their instability made us weak.

This

This being so, methinks we should never recollect the singular favour and grace of God in restoring our lawful Prince unto us, in restoring our antient Laws and Liberties by the restitution of our Prince, without a deep and feeling sense of this so timely and great deliverance, and serious and hearty thankfulness for it.

2. Especially if we further consider, that the same wise and gracious Providence, which restored our lawful Prince to us, brought back the free and publick use of that Religion which is without all doubt and scruple, the most agreeable to the Scripture, the most agreeable to Antiquity, the most Primitive and Apostolical in Doctrine, Worship, and in Government, the most peaceable, wise, and holy, the most consistent with civil Government, the aptest to make men good and happy both in this and the other world, of any Religion whatsoever publickly owned in any Nation. And as to that particular instance of obedience to the civil Magistrate, I may very truly and justly say, *first*, that they of the Roman Church teach Doctrines inconsistent with it; and *then further*, that there
is

is not any other Church that so expressly declares for it, that professes it an indispensable duty rather to suffer, than move sedition, with that frankness, with that openness, with that clearness, nor, as I believe, with that sincerity, that the Church of *England* doth profess it.

Being then, the benefits which attended the restitution of our Prince were both so numerous, and so great, Let us heartily praise the Author of them, let us remember who it was, that wrought so great deliverance for us, and not deny to return so deserved, so small a tribute as our praises, and thanksgivings to him.

2. And which may serve to move to this with greater efficacy and success, is the several difficulties and obstructions, that might have hindered our deliverance, had not God himself appeared for it. Many attempts had been made before to shake off the yoke that was upon us, and to restore our Prince and Liberties, but these attempts were not successful, nor had they other effects or issues, than to encrease our former burdens and enrage the Enemy they should have conquered.

The Usurpation had been long, and
length

length of time had given some strength and credit to it, and made it seem almost ridiculous to hope for any deliverance from it. Besides all this, it had spread an interest far and wide throughout the Nation, it had drawn in many to share in it, it had made it self many friends, and alliances, and relations; It had given greatness and power to some, riches and honours unto others, it made it self useful and necessary as was suggested, and believed; believed, I say, by many persons, to the very welfare of the Nation, which gave no little strength unto it.

3. And yet when God appeared against it, when he, whose Providence rules the World, designed to put an end unto it, how easily was it blown away, and scattered like chaff before the wind? What a wonderful folly and infatuation blinded the Counsels that were for it? what a change was wrought in the hearts of men, unanimously to appear against it? what general desires and inclinations now suddenly kindled in mens hearts to their rightful Prince, their antient Laws, and the former Government of the Nation? and whence was this zeal and vigour,
this

this general harmony of inclinations; this agreement of Councils and endeavours, but only from the God of Spirits, from him that moves the hearts of men, *when*, and *where*, and *whither* he pleases by strong though invisible operations. And which further entitles God to our deliverance, was that it was wrought without Arms, without war, without the effusion and loss of blood, in a still, and quiet, and peaceable manner.

This shews that it was from the God of peace, this owns him for its proper Author, and to him belongs the honour of it. To us the due and proper use of such a timely and great deliverance.

2. Having thus dispatched the *former* general, namely the acknowledgment made to God, that it is he that settles Kingdoms and Common-wealths, proceed we now unto the *latter*, which is the prayer put up to him; *Strengthen O God what thou hast wrought for us:* where we have these two things suggested.

1. The necessity of Gods assistance for the confirmation and establishment of the Societies of mankind especially

2. And

2. And Secondly, his willingness to establish them upon their due and right behaviour, both which things are plainly granted by him that made this prayer for it, else had the prayer it self been useless.

1. The first thing then that is suggested, is the necessity of Gods assistance for the establishment and confirmation of the Societies of mankind. And had we no more for the demonstration of the necessity of Gods assistance to this purpose, than the very nature of mortal men, even this might serve for the proof of it.

All the affairs of mankind depend upon the actions of men, their actions depend upon their Counsels, and their Counsels (generally) upon their passions, and these upon so many accidents, so many little uncertain causes, so numerous, so various things, that it is no wonder that every day produces so many alterations; the wonder is, that the greatest things that depend upon such uncertain causes, the greatest Kingdoms and Common-Wealths, have not more and quicker revolutions, greater, and more sudden changes, than what we generally find have been.

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The strength and settlement of every Government, of every Kingdom and Common-Wealth, depends not only upon the close and entire Union of the members of the same Society amongst themselves, (a thing not easie to be had) but upon all the several causes, that keep the balance even and steady between the neighbouring Nations also; which causes are so very numerous, and so various, mutable, and uncertain, that the balance would daily change and vary, did not God himself hold the scales, and keep things even by his own power. It is impossible to give an account of all the causes that may produce strange alterations in the Societies of mankind, unless providence shall interpose for their continuance and preservation.

A sudden fire may break out in a Capital City, and presently consume the greatest part of the Wealth and Treasure of a Nation. A tempest, or violent inundation, an earthquake, or thunder from above may have the very same effects. A general Plague may sweep away such vast multitudes of the Inhabitants, as that the rest may be exposed to the invasion of their neighbours.

bours. This gave *Sparta* a great advantage against *Athens*. The dulness and idleness of one Country may give opportunity to another to overgrow it in wealth and power, and so to conquer and enslave it.

The Vice and Luxury of a People may soon consume their own strength, and bring the same distress and difficulty upon a Country that they usually bring on a single Family: Ease and plenty, and wealth it self may first occasion disuse of Arms, and then infect a whole Nation with a general softness, and effeminacy, and so expose it to the Usurpation of a hardier and more needy People. Thus fell the *Persians* before the *Greeks*. The death of a Prince or a great Man may prove destructive to a People. When *Epaminondas* the Theban fell, *Thebes* it self fell with him, was never prosperous before nor after him. Add hereunto what violent changes and alterations domestick Seditions may produce in every Nation, and how many causes and little accidents may easily produce such Sedition. The errors and mistakes of Magistrates, the natural inconstancy of the People, the ambition of Men of Wit

and Parts, or such as fanſie themſelves to be ſo, their mutual enmities amongſt themſelves, their envy at each others greatness, their infinite rage and indignation, when they fail of what they aſpire after. Theſe, with infinite other cauſes, (which are impoſſible to be numbred) do as naturally tend to the diſſolution of publick bodies of Civil Governments and Societies, as all the diſeaſes, and fatal accidents to which mans body is obnoxious both from within and without alſo, to the deſtruction of his body.

Now to what end is this diſcourſe ? to ſhew the need, that all the concerns of mankind, that the greateſt States and Kingdoms have of ſupport from Divine Providence; being not only ſo inclinable to crumble to pieces of themſelves by the diſeaſes that are within them, but likewise ſo obnoxious too to be daſhed to pieces each by other.

And if the very Civil Societies of mankind need the aſſiſtance of Gods Providence for their continuance, how much more doth Religion want it ? Religion, if true, is a ray from God, and depends as much upon his influence as the beam depends upon the Sun.

And

And being planted in us men, must needs partake of our infirmities, and therefore is apt even of it self like other establishments and constitutions, to vary from Primitive institution, and lose its original strength and purity. So it came to pass, that Christianity, which in the first and Primitive ages maintained it self against all the cruelties of persecution by the zeal and piety of its followers, afterwards suffered strange decays; first by infinite swarms of Heresies, and then by Ignorance and Superstition, which now is reel'd to the other extreme, namely, to Atheism and Infidelity, and to the contempt of all Religion.

Nor need we wonder it should be difficult to preserve so wise and holy a Religion as that which Christ hath revealed to us in its original strength and purity, for it hath strong and numerous Enemies. Every mans lusts are at enmity with it, every mans vanity apt to corrupt it, every mans Ignorance apt to mistake it, nay the very Religion of some persons, their pride and pretence to Inspiration the greatest Enemy to this Religion.

Besides all this, there are several ac-

cidents that may have dangerous effects upon it according to the nature of times and places. If the Ministers of it be poor and mean, this generally brings contempt on them, and upon Religion for their sakes. If they be rich, this creates envy, and then Sacrilege is Reformation.

If a National Church be guarded and settled by the Laws of the State, Dissenters complain of persecution; and if it be not so guarded, it is impossible it should be national, that is, that one and the same thing should ever be able to approve it self to an infinite difference of apprehensions. If a Church be settled by the Laws of the State, and those not put in Execution, opposers have a double advantage; the Laws of the State being against them, give them all the advantage of being thought to suffer persecution; The not executing those Laws gives them all the advantages of Toleration, and truly they have great advantages that have both these put together, that of a seeming persecution, and that of a real Toleration. To these I might add many other instances to shew the frailty and mutability of all the Societies of mankind, and how much help
they

they do require from the power and Providence of God Almighty for their establishment and preservation.

2. But I have said enough of this, and shall now proceed to the next particular, which is the willingness of God Almighty to afford his help and assistance to them upon their due and right behaviour.

Now the terms whereupon Divine Providence usually strengthens and settles Nations in peace, and quiet, and prosperity, are (1) either general, or

(2) More particular.

(1.) The general terms are the piety and vertue of a Nation.

(2.) The more particular are due reverence to the Magistrate, and chearful obedience to the Laws.

The former of these, that is to say, piety and vertue are so necessary, so indispensable to this end, that it is impossible that any Nation should flourish and be secure without them.

Prophaneness, impiety, and irreligion, riot, and luxury, and oppression are so destructive to the peace and strength of every Nation, that would God leave them to themselves, and to their natural effects and issues, would

he stand neuter, or indifferent, and bring no other evils on them, than what they bring upon themselves, they would at length destroy a Nation; for a people abandoned to prophaneness can have no conscience, faith, or truth to knit them together in society, and the vices of luxury and excess are like a flame that eats and devours its own fuel, and then perishes together with it, dies and vanishes when that is consumed. But God is far from being indifferent to any National sins or vices; his Judgments indeed may be delayed, but they are sure to come at last, and that in most severe displeasure, they have iron hands though leaden heels, and come with so much greater violence for having been so long delayed. Prophaneness, wickedness, and impiety destroyed the Kingdom of the Jews, a Kingdom settled by peculiar Providence, and under a Family chosen by God, and anointed by his special Command. God hath prescribed it as a Law, as a certain Rule to his own Providence not to protect any such people, as live in rebellion against himself: and this we learn from his own words, *Dent. 5. 29. O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear*

fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever. Where he is pleased to represent it as a thing ven out of his own power (because so contrary to that Law, which he hath prescribed to his own Providence) to make it well with an impious people; so necessary and so indispensable are piety and vertue to the establishment of a Nation.

2. But now the more particular terms requisite to the same establishment are due reverence unto the Magistrate, chearful obedience to the Laws, quiet and peaceable dispositions. These are so requisite to this end, that whatsoever is contrary to them, Rebellion, Tumult, and Sedition immediately tend unto destruction: which is the reason why God hath charged and required obedience to the Magistrate in such expresse and explicite language, and under a most severe penalty. So hath he done *Rom.*

13. 1, 2. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive
to

to themselves damnation. But this is a duty that I need not perswade in this Audience.

All I have further to add is this, that while we return our thanks to God for restoring our Prince, and Laws, and Government, we do not omit the like for the peace we now enjoy under them, while all our Neighbours are in want.

We dwell at home in our Country, and sleep securely in our beds, while they are driven from place to place, and alarmed with daily fears and dangers.

We build, and plant, and adorn our houses and habitations, while theirs are burnt and battered down, and lie in ruine and desolation.

We sow and reap, eat and drink in peace and plenty, and enjoy the fruits of our own labours, while others reap what they sow, and the owners, it may be, starve for want, and think it well to save their lives (which yet they cannot always do) with their loss of all accommodations. *What shall we render unto the Lord for these and all his mercies to us?* Let us love the Author of all our happiness, let us demonstrate that love by free and thankful obedience to him.

him. Let us thus study peace with him, and let us also duly study the things that make for peace amongst our selves. Let us heartily and really love one another: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from us, with all malice: and, Let us be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven us. Let us fear God, honour the King, not meddling with them that are given to change. So will that God, who hath wrought our deliverance, strengthen what he hath wrought for us.

To him, &c.

The



The Third Sermon.

Philip. I. 27, 28.

That ye stand fast in one Spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries.

THere were two sorts of bitter Enemies that opposed themselves to Christianity in the primitive Ages of the Gospel; the former were the *Idolatrous Gentiles*, in whose hands the secular Government then remained. The latter were those of the *Jewish Religion*, who had toleration amongst the Gentiles. Both which, though differing each with other, did yet conspire and agree in this, to extinguish and root out Christianity. The former, because that this Religion did as well demonstrate the Gods they worshipped to be no Gods (but Devils, or Beasts, or dead mens Souls, Images, and inanimate Creatures) as the worship itself to be vain and barbarous.

barous. The latter, because it disannulled the temporary Rites of *Moses* his Law, much more the many Superstitions, which themselves had added thereunto. Upon this account the Apostle *S^t Paul*, being now in bonds, writes this Epistle to the *Philippians*, whom he had converted to Christianity, not only further to inculcate what he had before delivered to them, but also to fortifie and prepare them against such sufferings and persecutions, as their Religion drew upon them. He lets them know, that he himself was now a prisoner for the Gospel, that he was so far from being terrified either by his bonds, or death it self, that were it not for their sakes, to whom his life might be more useful, he should rather desire to be dissolved and to be with *Christ*. He further acquaints them with his design to visit them again in order to their support and settlement, if God should rescue him from his bonds. In the mean time, gives this admonition: *Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come, and see you, or else be absent, I may bear of your affairs; that ye stand fast in one Spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing*

thing terrified by your adversaries. That ye stand fast, &c.

In which words you have an account, what are the most effectual means for any Church, which God hath blessed with the true Faith of Christianity, still to abide and continue in it. *Firmness of mind in every mans private belief of it, close union amongst themselves, zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation, and courage against such oppositions as others may possibly make against it.*

1. Firmness of mind in every mans private belief of it, which is suggested in these words: *Stand fast*, that is to say, as it there follows, *in the faith of the Gospel.*

2. Union amongst themselves: *Stand fast in one spirit with one mind.*

3. Zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation: *Stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.*

4. Courage against such oppositions as other persons make against it: *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries.*

These are the methods which our Apostle here propounds for a Church
to

to retain the true Faith, that is, to continue a true Church.

1. The first of which is firmness of mind in every mans private belief of truth. For seeing that every particular Church is made up of particular persons; so far as particular Members fail in the true Faith, so far is that Church; they are Members of, maimed and mutilated in its parts, and the whole in tendency to dissolution.

Now seeing the firmness of belief depends upon clear and evident proof, I might here offer a demonstration of the truth and excellency of Christianity. But being this is neither so needful, nor yet so seasonable to the occasion of our meeting, I shall rather chuse to address my self to what the occasion now requires, which is, to shew the truth and excellence of Christianity, as it is professed in our own Church in opposition to that of *Rome*: which I shall do by comparing theirs and ours together in point of *Faith*, and *Worship*, and *Manners*.

1. And first of all, for matter of Faith, we firmly believe the holy Scriptures, and every thing therein contained to be the infallible Word of God. We believe the Scriptures do contain all things
necessary

necessary to Salvation, according as St. *John* assures us: *Joh. 20. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.* Which we could not have, if every thing necessary to Salvation was not written, was not contained in this very Gospel of St. *John*. Nay further yet, we believe and receive all Creeds that were ever received in the Catholick Church. These Creeds are taken into our Liturgy, they are repeated in our Churches, we signifie our assent to them by standing up when they are repeated, and are we still to be judged Hereticks, and deficient in the Catholick Faith?

On the other hand, the Roman Church deny the Scriptures to be a compleat Rule of Faith, they build their faith upon Tradition, a thing uncertain. They rely upon Councils, which may erre; nay upon such as have grossly erred. They vary as well from the Primitive Church in many cases, as from the holy Scripture it self. And last of all, they pretend a power of making new Articles of Faith, that is, such as were not made by our Blessed Lord and his Apostles; which being so, let reason judge,

judge, whether they or we be likeliest to erre in point of Faith.

2. For matter of Worship (in the second place) their publick Prayers are made and used in a tongue unknown unto the people ; ours in a tongue which we all understand. And here let St. Paul decide the controversie that is between us, 1 Cor. 14, 15, 16, &c. *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. From whence it appears what edification may be expected from their prayers, that is to say, none at all. And therefore the Apostle further adds, I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all ; yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*

But to proceed : as we make our prayers in a known tongue, so in them we invoke the true God, and him only.

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We use no other Mediator, no other Patron but only Christ, whom God hath appointed so to be. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. But they that are of the Church of Rome, make their addresses to Saints and Angels, as well for patronage and protection, as for their prayers to God for them; and some of those (the Virgin Mary) do they invoke in as magnificent and high a stile, as they invoke God himself.

We pay no worship to any Images, seeing that God hath expressly said, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them.* But they bow down and prostrate themselves before the Images of Christ, and others. And though they affirm that the honour they give unto the Image passes through it to the person, whom it represents; yet still they acknowledge they worship the Image, that this, at least, is a transient object of their Worship.

And then again, we give the Sacrament

ment of the Lords Supper unto the people as well as the Priests in both kinds. So it was instituted by Christ himself, so it was given all along for many Ages : but others, in perfect contradiction to the Institution of our Lord, deny the Cup unto the Laity.

We believe that after Consecration the Bread and Wine set apart and consecrated for the Sacrament, do still retain the natural substance of bread and wine. And so the Apostle himself believed, when he stiled that bread, of which we partake in that Sacrament, *1 Cor. 10. 17. We are all partakers of that one bread*; and that the Cup, of which we drink, and thus believing, we do not give Divine worship unto the Elements in the Sacrament. But they, in absolute contradiction both unto Scripture, and unto Reason, and unto four of their five Senses, believe that after Consecration there is no bread, but the natural flesh of Christ's body; no wine, but his very natural blood. Upon which account they pay a Divine worship to them, worship that which is not God, that which is really bread and wine.

To all these things I might now add the Superstition of their Devotions,

their Prayers for delivering departed Souls out of that place they call Purgatory, a place that is of their own making for gaining Wealth unto their Church. Their Pilgrimages to the Tombs of Saints, an infinite Mass of Rites and Ceremonies, for which things they have no precept in the Scripture, no example either there, or in the primitive Ages of Christianity; Rites which obscure and burden Religion with a numberless heap of Superstitions, contrary to the very nature, to the simplicity of Christianity.

From matter of Worship pass we on to matter of common life and action.

1. As it relates to moral Duty.

2. And also unto Civil Society.

1. And for the former our Church declares that true repentance is absolutely necessary to gain the remission and pardon of sin. We also affirm that reformation is the best and most essential part of true repentance. We do not pretend to any power to give Absolution to any person, who doth not practise such repentance; that is to say, who doth not truly reform himself in life and action, in case life be continued to him; or in real purpose and resolution,

tion, in an effectual change of heart. We make no pretence to an Authority of giving Indulgences and Remissions, or of admitting any Penances and Commutations for the Expiation of the sin, where the sin is still continued in. Whereas they of the Church of *Rome* give Absolution to Attrition, that is, to the meer fear of Hell, and these two things, namely, *Attrition* and *Absolution* they judge sufficient to Salvation. They admit of Penances and Commutations for the Expiation of mens sins, and by these means teach their Followers to hope for remission of the punishment, although they retain the sin it self. And lest the Penance should seem burthensom and too severe, they can give Indulgence for that too to them that will be at the cost to buy it. By all which means they make the Precepts of the Gospel, the Laws of Christ, of no effect, make it needless to obey them, unless a man have a mind unto it, and to do more than what is needful.

2. For Civil Society, 'tis well known how many there are in the Church of *Rome*, who do affirm that it is not needful to discharge a promise to a Heretick; and all are Hereticks in their account,

who make profession of Christianity, and do not communicate with their Church. We know there was safe conduct promised to *John Hus* and *Jerom* of *Prague* to the Council of *Constance*, and how that promise was performed. The promise was broken, and the men burnt, and so indeed they justified their Doctrine by their practice.

They exempt the Clergy from the Authority of secular Power, till they be surrendered thereunto by their Superiors in the Church, and they surrender them when they please; and when they please, they do not. Upon which account many Villanies, many Murders have been committed in the State, to the infinite scandal of Religion. It was complained in the sixth year of King *Henry* the Second, that there have been above an hundred man-slaughters committed by the then Clergy since the beginning of his Reign.

But that which is of the vilest consequence in this point is, that they affirm that the Popes of *Rome* have power to depose Kings and Princes, and that pursuant to this Doctrine, they have excommunicated and deposed lawful Princes in several places, and given their
King:

Kingdoms and Dominions to other persons: that there are infinite numbers of Authors, who defend and justify this Doctrine: that these are countenanced by a Council (that is to say, the fourth *Lateran*) which they themselves call a General Council. For it is there expressly said, that in case a Prince does not purge his Country from heretical pravity in the space of a year, after admonition so to do by the Metropolitan and his Comprovincials, then this be signified to the Pope, that he may deprive him of all Authority, & *terram ejus exponat Catholicis occupandam*, expose his Country to be possessed and seized by Catholicks. In direct pursuance of which Doctrine, private persons have stab'd Princes, and have been commended and applauded by the Pope himself for so doing. For so it was in the case of *Henry the Third of France*.

These are the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome* relating unto Civil Society; what ours are, I need not say. We owne our selves obliged to do good to all men; and that although we have not obliged our selves thereto by any particular promise to them, much more discharg'd our faith to all. We owne the

King to be supreme in his own dominions, and that there is no power in any to depose him. And to conclude, we owne the truth of S. *Peter's* words, and that in the very fullest sense. *Honour* (or as the margent reads it) *esteem all men, love the Brotherhood, fear God, honour the King, 1 Pet. 2. 17.* We owne all to be oblig'd to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or to Governours as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers.

I have here given you an account of some of the most material differences between us and the Church of *Rome* in point of *faith* and *worship*, and *manners*, and should now perswade you to stand fast in all these things as they are taught in this Church, not suffering your selves to be abased by vain Sophistry of deceivers. If they ask you, where our Church was before *Luther*? ask you again, where theirs was before the fourth Laterane Council, nay before that of *Trent* it self? For sure it is there was never any Church before those Councils, that did in all things teach and practise, as the Church of *Rome* at this present time. Tell them, our
Church

Church, that is, a Church, wherein the same faith, and worship, the same obedience to Gods commands, were taught and required, which are now taught and required in ours, were many ages before theirs. Such a Church there was as soon as there was a Christian Church, such a Church planted by Christ himself, such a Church propagated by his Apostles, such a Church for several hundred years, for several ages after that.

Afterwards there arose a time of darkness upon the face of the Christian world, in that darkness many errors crept into the Church, many corruptions in worship, and manners; then was our Church depraved and corrupted, as theirs now is: but now is our Church by Gods grace reformed and restored to primitive purity; which theirs is not.

Whether theirs or ours be the better Church in point of faith, may be easily known by this instance, we make the Scripture the rule of faith, and this is a most unerring rule; they add tradition unto Scripture, and this is greatly exposed to error; we have added nothing as absolutely necessary to salvation, to the faith contained in the antient Creeds of the Catholick Church,
they

they have added much to those Creeds, they have added some such things to them, as do by consequence overthrow some parts of the very Creeds themselves. Whether theirs or ours be the safer Church for a man to hope for Salvation in, may easily appear from these particulars. We teach such worship, such practice, as are most clearly and fully lawful, lawful beyond all peradventure, for sure it is undoubtedly lawful for a man to worship the true God, to use no Image in his worship, to use him as Mediator whom he hath appointed so to be. It is lawful beyond all peradventure to have our prayers in a known tongue, to give the communion unto the Laity in both kinds, to reform, as well as confess our sins, to use no art or commutations for the expiation of our sins, but to forsake the sins themselves. These things are lawful without all doubt, but that the contrary to these are lawful, is the doubtfullest thing in all the world, or rather to speak more properly, it is most certain, they are not lawful. And therefore I leave it to you to judge, whether communion with our Church, or the Church of *Rome*, be the safer way unto salvation

tion, and if you judge, as I know you must, stand fast in the faith you have received, and the Church wherein you were baptized. And so much may serve for the first method for a true Church to preserve it self in the true faith, firmness of mind in every mans private belief of it.

2. Proceed we now unto the second, and that is Union amongst themselves, as it is suggested in these words, *stand fast in one spirit with one mind. If a kingdom be divided against it self, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house be divided against it self, that house cannot stand,* Mark 3. 23, 24. Neither can a Church, which is so divided; If the members of the natural body be rent and torn each from other, this is the destruction of the whole, and death to every single part. Disunion doth of its own nature naturally tend to dissolution, there needs no Enemy from abroad to destroy and ruine such a Church, as is divided against it self, the mutual discords that are within, the divisions amongst its own members, their mutual envyings, and animosities, that naturally arise out of these divisions, effectually tend to separation, and separation to dissolution.

Besides

Besides the intestine strifes and divisions, which are seen and observed in any Church invite its Enemys to attempt its utter ruine and destruction, they open a breach for them to enter, they give free and an easie entrance to swarms of seducers to invade it, they give a plausible and fair pretence for a very plausible and specious objection; you have no union amongst your selves; from whence it appears you have not the truth, *Truth* is one, and so is the *Faith* that's built upon it. You are not one amongst your selves, and therefore you have not the true faith. Now therefore leave and quit that Church which hath no unity in its members, and come to that which is united. To these assaults (and these are dangerous to weaker minds) doth every Church expose it self, which is not at unity in it self.

Now therefore let us be most cautious to be at union amongst our selves; and in order to so good an end, let us take care to make our breaches no wider than indeed they are. We do agree, exactly agree amongst our selves in point of faith, in the belief of all those Doctrines, that
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are absolutely necessary to salvation, thus far we agree with the Protestant Churches that are abroad, and further yet, with the generality of the Dissenters that are at home. And as for this Church it self, there is as great, and greater consent in all the parts and members of it, than in the Church of *Rome* it self. They have divisions amongst themselves, and greater than any amongst us. They charge either other, in some points, with nothing less than heresie it self. We have no such charges amongst us. They have their Dominicans, and Franciscans, they have their Molinists, and their Jansenists, one Order bandying against another with bitter discords and animosities. They are not agreed in the very rule of faith it self, some make the Decrees of the Pope only, some the Decrees of a General Council, others the Decrees of the Pope and Council both together, to be the only rule of Faith; from whence it most inevitably follows that that must be Faith unto one party, which is not so unto another. Seeing some things have been decreed by Popes, that have not been decreed by Councils, some things by Councils, and not by Popes. From
whence

whence it appears that after all the boasts we hear of union in the Church of *Rome*; there is in truth less of union in that Church, than in this that we are members of.

And for the increase and preservation of this so blessed and needful thing, let us take care not to advance any private opinions in opposition to publick wisdom. Let us not insist upon any Doctrines as absolutely necessary to salvation which the Church hath not proposed as such. Let no particular sort of men presume to stile themselves the Church, or the only genuine Sons of it, in opposition unto others, who believe the Doctrines of the Church, who have promised due Conformity to it, and evidently practise what they promise. These in truth are the sure and genuine Sons of the Church who go so far as the Church requires, and content themselves to go no further. And if any deny them so to be; they have private fancies of their own, and by obtruding these on others, and censuring those that receive them not, they weaken the Church, disturb its union, disquiet its peace, and take a course to bring a dangerous Schism into it.

Now

Now therefore let it be our care to maintain Charity, to cherish Peace, to study Union amongst our selves. And this is the second of these methods which powerfully tend to our preservation, and of the Faith which we do profess.

3. The third is singular zeal and diligence in joynt endeavours for its defence and propagation. For so the Apostle farther adds : *Stand fast in one Spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.* There must be zeal, there must be endeavour, there must be joynt endeavour used for the promotion of this end.

1. Our enemies have a zeal against it, and if we our selves have none for it, how can we hope that we shall preserve it, unless there be zeal opposed to zeal, unless we be concerned for truth, as they concern themselves against it, can we reasonably judge we can secure it? No, if they find that we our selves are cold and indifferent in our Religion, that we shew no hearty affection for it, that we value our ease, love our pleasure, esteem the smallest concerns and interest more than we prize and value that, may they not then justly conclude that we shall easily part with it? And
will

will not this excite their diligence, and encourage attempts to take it from us? May I speak what I verily think is true? It is our indifference in our Religion, the gross neglects that very many, and the foul contempts that some others have clearly shewed unto this profession, that hath given encouragement to our enemies to design and attempt its extirpation. If they can say (and I wish they may not) they have no concernment for their Religion, they have no regard for the Ministers of it, they neglect, they despise it in life and practice, many of them very seldom appear in their publick Assemblies and Congregations, very few frequent that holy Sacrament, which is the great and solemn profession of joyning in Communion with it. They give no evidence of any zeal or affection to it, and therefore, no doubt, they will part with it upon very cheap and easie terms; bring their Estates, or ease and safety, bring the advantages of this world into a competition with it, and there is no doubt but they will abandon and quit the one, that they may quietly enjoy the other. They will rather chuse to enjoy their Estates, ease, and safety without their Religion,

Religion, than their Religion without these. If we could penetrate into the hearts of those that design the extirpation of our Religion, I fear we should find these thoughts in them; and that these have encouraged that design; which cannot otherwise be resisted, than by letting them know they are deceived, that we have as great and warm a zeal for the preserving our Religion, as they for its ruine and destruction.

2. To this zeal we must add endeavour, it is not the goodness of a cause that is sufficient to defend it. If it be true, and just, and reasonable, it must be evidenced so to be, and endeavour used for its defence. If it be true, it is so much fitter to be pleaded. If it be just, it is just to appear, and labour for it, it doth still so much the more deserve the use of reason in every private Professor of it, the use of Authority in every Magistrate for its advancement and preservation. The wisest Laws will not secure the best Religion, if they themselves be not secured. They can neither plead, nor execute themselves. They rather excite contempt and scorn, and irritate enemies to opposition, where they are left to shift for themselves,

selves, without any countenance from the Magistrate.

Now therefore it would still retain the Reformed Religion; reformed I say, by the blessing of God upon the pains of our Forefathers, and at the expence of the very blood of many of them, if we desire to deliver it down to our posterity, as they transmitted it unto us; we must upon every fair occasion profess our hearty belief of it, profess our zeal for its defence; maintain its truth against opposers, give no occasion to them to think, that fraud or force, hopes or fears, rewards or punishments in this world shall ever chase or remove us from it.

And may not the diligence of our enemies, for the subversion of our Faith, awake our minds, excite our diligence to maintain it? If they insinuate and intrude into all societies, all places, all degrees and ranks of men, and use the utmost of their skill to seduce them, and impose upon them, to move them, both by hopes and fears, to embrace their errors and delusions; shall we be idle, or remiss in the mean time in the securing of real truth? Have they so much of zeal and fervor for meer vanities and
super-

superstitions ? And have we none for real piety ? Are they so active, as that they compass Sea and Land to make men Profelytes unto them. And have we no care to secure our selves, at least at home ? Do they neglect no opportunity, do they omit no endeavours, no not the foulest and most unlawful to promote and propagate their Religion ? And are we asleep, are we in a maze, are we in a dream, while we should defend and secure ours ?

Awake we then from that security, and from that coldness and indifference, from that remissness and neglect, which gives encouragement to our enemies to attempt the destruction of our Religion, and may (if not in time reformed) exceeding justly provoke God to deliver us up into their hands.

3. Let us all awake while it is day, and unite our selves in joynt endeavours (the third particular I proposed) to defend and propagate our Religion. Let us joyn together in the clear and open profession of it. Let us constantly attend the Worship of God in the publick Assemblies, where the Religion is professed. Let us frequently joyn in the Celebration of that holy Sacrament,

which is not only a Communion with Christ our Head, but the aptest and clearest signification of our Communion each with other. Let us mutually counsel and advise; let us encourage one another to retain and hold fast that Faith, *which was once delivered to the Saints, striving for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by our adversaries.*

4. Which is the fourth of these methods which our Apostle here propounds for the defence of the true faith, and so is that which we profess.

Our Faith is that which our blessed Lord came down from Heaven to reveal to men, he confirm'd it by many mighty Miracles, he died on the Cross, he rose again, he ascended to Heaven, he gave the Spirit to his Apostles and holy Fellows to preach and propagate it in the world. These and several after them for divers Ages laid down their lives for its defence, and made it victorious in the world, notwithstanding all the oppositions that the powers of the world, and the lusts of men made against it; and why should we fear the wit or malice, the craft or strength that any enemies can use against it? if we will be faithful

faithful our selves to it. We can at most but die for it. And have we not reason to encourage us so to do, if ever the times (which God forbid) should call for that? What saith our Lord in this case? *Luk. 12. 4, 5. Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea I say unto you fear him.* Fear God, and nothing but God on'y. Fear him, and you shall not need to fear any other thing but him only. He can discover the darkest Plots, he can defeat the greatest craft, he can disarm the greatest Powers, and scatter them all into confusion.

And we are not without very good hopes that he will concern himself for us, and imploy his Providence for our help.

We have a Cause that God hath favoured, wonderfully favoured in former times. How many Plots against this Cause did he discover, confound, and punish, during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth? How did he do the like again, when her Successor began his Reign? How hath he still preserved and blessed

it in many confusions, many divisions amongst our selves since that time ? How hath he now at the present time wonderfully discovered the works of darkness, brought hidden and secret evils to light ? Made those discoveries, done those things that we could never have done for our selves ?

God will never be wanting to us, or to the Religion we profess, if we our selves be not wanting to it. Let us therefore awaken all our powers to diligence in our own defence, and then commit our cause to God, making our daily prayers to him, that he would defend his own Truth, that he would protect his own Inheritance, and water the Vine that himself hath planted.

Yea, let us make our appeals to him, whether we or our enemies be in the right.

And then, O God, who art a just and righteous God, take the matter into thine own hand, do thou judge between them and us. Pardon our sins, forgive those evils which may provoke thine indignation against us; but for our cause, for that Faith that we do profess against our enemies, that we freely leave to thee, we do appeal unto thy
judg-

judgment, and are willing to stand or fall by it.

Let us therefore adorn it in our lives, this is the first and principal way of procuring the blessing of God upon it. Let us seek and improve all occasions to gain it credit and reputation. And seeing that it hath pleased the King to recommend the rebuilding of *St Pauls* unto our Charity at this time, and himself to set us a great Example; let us not be wanting to this Work according unto our proportion.

It is certainly a Work of Christian piety to build up places for Gods Worship. No sooner were the Christians freed from the Persecutions of the Heathen, but they did zealously apply themselves to this work, and raised magnificent and noble Structures for the publick places of Gods Worship.

This Church, which is now to be rebuilt, may be stiled the chief of all the Nation. It hath formerly been its greatest glory in its kind, and we hope it may be so again. What pity were it that such a Work should fail or flag at such a time, when we are to give especial evidence of a publick Spirit of free, and noble, and generous minds. The time

is an extraordinary time, the work an extraordinary work. Let us open our hands to a more than ordinary bounty towards it.

And as for us in this place, we have singular reason so to do; seeing it pleased Almighty God to preserve our Churches and Habitations from those flames that devoured our Neighbours. Now therefore let us at this time honour the Religion we do profess by this particular work of piety, as well as in all other instances; making our prayers to Almighty God, that he would defend his own Truth, that he would protect his own Inheritance, and preserve the Religion himself planted.

And than, O God, &c.

The



The Fourth Sermon.

Matth. 6. 23.

— *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?*

THE great security of mans life, as well from the cheats of his own lulls, as from the temptations of the world, depends upon true and stable Principles of Faith and Piety. And the ground of all these Principles is, a true judgment of what is happiness, what is the great end of life, and what are the ways that lead unto it, and a choice suitable thereunto. This is the thing which our Lord suggests, 19, 20, 21 verses. *Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for your selves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal, for says he, where your treasure is, there will your heart*

heart be also : that is to say , that which you chuse to be your happiness , that will you place your hearts upon , and pursue in all your deliberate actions. Having thus exhorted us to take care to chuse that for our chief good , which is indeed really so , to conduct our lives by true Principles , he speaks a Parable wherein he shews the great advantage of so doing , and the danger of doing otherwise. The former of these in those words , *vers. 22. The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light.* The application of which words is this : The judgment of the mind is the guide of life. Wherefore if the judgment be true and good, the life hath a true guide to rule it. And then the danger of a false judgment is declared in the words that immediately follow : *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body is full of darkness.* And so he comes to the words of the Text : *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?* that is , if thy judgment be corrupt , if thy mind and conscience be erroneous, how great and dangerous are those mistakes which thou art then exposed unto ?

Now

Now that which the words thus explained offer unto our consideration, is the mighty danger that they are in to lose their souls, who are led and governed by false Principles. Which will appear, if we consider that such Principles,

1. Leave them dangerously exposed to sin.

2. And not only so exposed unto it, but that they also encourage to it. I say,

1. They leave them dangerously exposed to evil: which will be very clear and manifest, if we consider,

1. First of all, that our present condition and state is such, that we are under many temptations thereunto.

2. That the nature of man is apt of it self to close and comply with those temptations.

3. That we have nothing else, save only true and right Principles, assisted by the Grace of God, to prevent and hinder complying with them.

4. From whence it most inevitably follows, that where those Principles are not found, we are most dangerously exposed to evil.

1. I shall begin with the first of these, which is, that our present condition is such,

such, that we are under many temptations unto evil.

The world is full of deceits and snares: where-ever we tread we are in danger to fall into them. There is no business, no imployment, no condition or state of life, but lies exposed unto temptation. Sometimes we are courted by sensual charms, by the hopes of favour, or wealth, or honour to part with our innocence and integrity; sometimes we are in great danger to have it extorted and wrested from us by the dreads and dangers of the world. Sometimes an occasion is offered to men to oppress or to defraud their neighbour, and by these means to gain Estates, and heap up abundance of wealth and riches. And there are the like occasions also of gaining esteem, applause, and honour, of gaining them, by unlawful means; and yet are these, and in these circumstances, no small temptation unto many. And as for sensual satisfactions, I need not say what great temptations they are to many; how they infatuate, how they bewitch the minds of men in strange forgetfulness of themselves, and of the accounts they must make to God in the world to come.

Add

Add hereunto the great provocations unto evil, men often offer each to other, and that not only by ill example, but by many other ways also. Who is he that lives without an enemy? and what will not an enemy do to blacken the Name, to injure the Estate, to blast the Fortune of him he hates? And shall I need to say, how far such injuries and affronts are apt to prevail with most men to anger, and malice, and animosity? And what a dangerous thing is it to admit and entertain these passions? Of that *S^t Paul* hath said enough, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. *Be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.* Which puts us in mind of another Tempter, who is most busie, and most subtle in making all the other temptations we meet withal operative and effectual upon us by his delusions and seductions. *For he walketh about as a roaring lyon seeking whom he may devour.*

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that as we are under many temptations in this world: so are our natures of themselves apt to comply with these temptations. They are too ready to gather fire from every spark, to find
occasion

occasion of doing evil, or lusting after it in the very least suggestion to it. What will not those that love the world readily undertake and act, when an opportunity of gaining wealth freely offers it self unto them? *They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.* And how many are there that fix this Principle in their minds, and govern all their designs by it, that they will be rich, however it be they gain their end?

I need not say, how great a temptation sensual pleasures are to others, nor how far others are inclined to popular fame and reputation; how proud, and stomachful, and ambitious, and how they swell with rage and anger, with envy, and malice, and animosity, when they are opposed and contradicted. I need not trouble my self to prove, that the nature of man is much corrupted, strangely degenerate and decayed. What are all the Histories of the World, but a Record, for the most part, of the corruption of humane Nature, of Wars and Tumults, fraud and falseness, oppression and cruelty, as an effect of those corruptions: insomuch that the
wise

wise and learned *Solomon* after all his experience and observation of the ways and manners of mankind, gives us his judgment in this conclusion, *Eccles. 7. 29. Lo, this only have I learn'd, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* So God made man at the first, but they have much corrupted themselves, and greatly depraved and abused their nature.

3. These things being so, that we are under many temptations unto evil, that humane nature is of it self apt to comply with these temptations : hence it appears in the third place, that we have nothing but good Principles, assisted by the Grace of God, to secure and to deliver us from them. Suppose an occasion and opportunity to do an evil presented and offered unto a man, suppose the nature of this person does of it self move and incline him thereunto, that it be a singular gratification to some predominant lust in him. Is it imaginable that this person should refuse to comply with this temptation, if he have no firm and stable Principles fixed and settled in his mind to prevent and hinder that compliance? If he be not first perswaded fully, that the thing is unlawful
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he is about , that it will involve him in great guilt , that this will expose him to Gods displeasure , and the severe effects thereof ? If he be not possess'd with these Principles, what should secure him from that sin ? Will the sensual person deny himself the delights and pleasures of sensuality ; or he that inordinately loves the world, refuse the occasions and opportunities of all unlawful gains and interests ; or the proud , and envious, and malicious pine by the advantages that are offered him, to revenge himself, and hurt his neighbour ; while he hath no principles and rules of life to resist and oppose these temptations, and his own inclinations to close with them ? Suppose him destitute of such Principles, of stedfast purpose and resolution never to vary from God's will to serve and gratifie his own lusts , never to lose eternal Glory to possess the advantages, enjoy the pleasures of this world ; and he is left as a naked man against the weapons of his enemy , and in no capacity to make resistance.

No sooner were the Gentile World for the violation of natural light abandoned by God unto themselves , and let to the government of their lusts
without

without the guidance of good Principles, but that they fell into most prodigious and horrid evils, as you may see it at large described in the first Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*. They fell into all degrees of evil, they persisted and continued in them without the least remorse of mind.

And when the Jews by their traditions corrupted the sacred word of God, when they mistook the rules of life, they also degenerated like the Gentiles, they were as blind in their superstitions, as the other were in their Idolatries.

Add hereunto that we are so far from being secure from the greatest evils without the fiercest and strongest Principles of hearty obedience unto God, that wee find it difficult for those Principles, to retain and hold us in obedience. Men know evil, and yet they do it; understand their duties, yet neglect them. They forsake and omit what they approve, they chuse and practise what they believe, and know is evil. They resist the light, they violate Conscience, they offer violence to their Principles; and while temptations are so strong, and natural desires so ill inclined,

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clined, as to lead them Captive unto evil against the convictions of their minds, against their Principles, and resolutions; how much more must the same things, have the same and worse effects upon them, where they have no Principles to oppose to their temptations they meet withall, and their own depraved, and corrupt affections.

The summ of all I have said is this: That we are under many temptations unto evil, that humane nature is of it self, apt to comply with those temptations, that we have nothing but good Principles to prevent and hinder such compliance. From whence it most inevitably follows, that where such principles are not found, where men are under the power and guidance of evil Principles, they are most dangerously exposed to evil. This is the least of the ill effects, that we can possibly expect from them.

2. But then secondly, we must consider, That as all ill principles in Religion leave us at least exposed to evil; so are there many do very highly encourage to it. There are such principles to be found, as turn the greatest crimes to merit, and make men hope
for

for a reward, hope to gain eternal glory, by the foulest practices in the world; by those that tend to eternal misery. Our blessed Lord foretold his followers, that the time would come *wherein they would put them out of the Synagogues, and not so only, but also that whosoever killed them should think he did God service by it, John 16. 2.* So did the Jews use his Disciples. They first accused them of Schism, and Heresie, and then persecuted them unto death. And just so doth the Roman Church to all Christians dissenting from them. They pronounce them guilty of Schism, and Heresie; they excommunicate them out of the Church, they flatly deny that they can be saved, they doom them all unto damnation; they pronounce it lawful to destroy them, to destroy the very greatest Princes when they have once judged them Hereticks. They make it a meritorious act in those that adventure so to do; and lest men should not venture upon it, some of them teach that they are obliged, and bound to do it, *extremo animarum suarum periculo, si vires habeant ad hoc idoneas* (Philopator,) under the pain of the loss of their Souls; if they have sufficient

H 2 strength

strength to do it. Could a man have thought that such practices, as these are, should ever have been undertaking by any, making profession of Christianity? could he have thought that although these should be undertaken, they should be justified and defended? nay urged, and pressed with great severity? under no less a tie, and penalty, than that of the loss of a mans Soul? But this it is to have *the mind and conscience defiled*, as the Apostle himself expresses it, *Tit. 1. 15.* This it is, as he speaks elsewhere, *1. Tim. 4. 2. to have the Conscience seared with a hot iron.* If a mans Principles be corrupt, his conscience perverted and depraved, what will not such a conscience admit, and such Principles urge upon him? *If the very light that is in him be darkness, how great then is that darkness.* And now to apply what I have said upon this point,

1. Seeing the danger of false Principles in Religion is so prodigiously and strangely great, let this be a mighty caution to us to avoid communion with such persons, as govern themselves by such Principles, and more especially the Church of Rome.

It is not imaginable how this Church hath

hath perverted the Doctrine of Christianity, and quite overthrown the practice of it in many considerable parts of it. There is scarce any one command of God, which they have not clouded and perverted by some perverse interpretations. And besides all this, they have formed and stated general Principles, which effectually lead to the overthrowing of all the precepts of Christianity. And some of these I shall instance in:

1. The first of these is the Doctrine received in the Roman Church of acting according to probable opinions, received not only among the Jesuits, but by many others as well as them.

1. They teach, that although an opinion seems to be false to any man, considering the reasons that make against it, yet that it is a probable opinion, if it be maintained by two, or three, nay by one Doctor of note amongst them.

2. And then secondly, that any person may lawfully act and govern himself by such an opinion in point of practice, by an opinion maintained by others, although it seem to be false to himself; just contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, *Rom. 14. 23. Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* The very words

they use are these: *Ex autoritate aui-
us tantum posse quem, illam in praxi am-
pleri, licet à principiis intrinsecis falsam
& improbabilem existimet*; that is, That
a man may lawfully follow an opinion in
practice upon the authority of one Doctor,
though he himself, considering the reasons
of that opinion, judge it to be false and
improbable. (*Gnimen. pag. 55.*) My Au-
thor adds an example to this, and that
is, although a Confessor shall himself
believe it to be unlawful to absolve a
man in a certain case; yet that not-
withstanding he may absolve him, if
others judge it to be lawful. Now here
I observe in the first place, that this
is directly against the Scripture, which
pronounces that to be unlawful, which
a man acts against his own mind and
conscience, although agreeably to other
mens. And then secondly, that this
opinion gives all men liberty to do
whatsoever a few Doctors, nay any one
of the Roman Church have judged law-
ful: And what is it, that some of
them have not judged lawful, espe-
cially against all those persons, up-
on whom they fix the name of Here-
ticks? And if you inquire, what is the
design of those persons that do maintain
this

this opinion, it is most evident, that it is this: That the spiritual Guides of the Roman Church may have a pretence to lead the people boldly to act what they require, although against the minds and judgments of them they lead. That is; in case a private person judge it unlawful to break his faith, to falsifie promise to a Heretick, or to deprive him of life, or fortunes, or reputation; yet that he may still lawfully do it, if two or three of their Guides and Teachers, nay if any one of them judge it lawful.

3. But then thirdly, they further teach, That where there are any two opinions, one less probable than another, that a man may lawfully guide his practice by that which appears to be less probable. So *Martial de Prado*, concludes, and abundance of others as well as he, (as *Guimen. p. 64.*) *Sape in praxi licitum est sequi opinionem minus probabilem, relicta probabiliori*: It is often lawful in matter of practice to follow a less probable opinion, forsaking that which is more probable. Which is as much as if they said, that a man is not bound to govern his life according to the best of his judgment, but may very lawfully do what is worse, where he knows and be-

lieves he might do better. And is this for a man to guide his life according to the rules of Charity, or that integrity, that sincerity, which true Christianity requires from us?

4. And yet I must add what is still worse; for it is added upon this point in the Church of Rome, *That it is lawful for any person to follow a less probable opinion rather than one that is more probable, and that although the more probable be also safer than the other.* And for this an Author of that Church cites the Testimonies of above forty of their Doctors, (*Guimen. p. 62, 64.*) And is this to teach like true and faithful Guides of Souls? Is this for men to behave themselves like faithful Pastors? and careful of the Salvation of men, to give them licence to guide their lives by such opinions, as are not only less probable, but less safe than the direct contrary are? But these are the Methods, these are the Arts of the Roman Church to draw men in unto their Church; to allow them liberty to please themselves, to do the things that are most pleasing, though least safe; to gratifie sinful inclinations, though to the prejudice of their Souls. By these liberties they fill their Church with

with numerous Profelytes and Disciples, and gain Authority to themselves to put them upon the foulest actions, by teaching them, that it is lawful for them to follow the Judgment of their Teachers, though it seems false unto themselves; which is to rob every private person of his Conscience, Reason, and Understanding, and to oblige them to follow others, who, as appears from these particulars, have nothing at all of conscience in them.

2. Add hereunto another Principle, taught and maintained in the Roman Church, concerning the rectifying of the intention, which is, that a man may lawfully do such things as are materially evil, provided always that he direct the inward intention of his mind unto a good and an honest end. As for example, that a man may lawfully smite with a sword, where he hath received a blow with the hand, and is secure from further prejudice, provided he do it *non ad sumendam vindictam, sed ad vitandam infamiam*, Guimen. pag. 199, 200. that is to say, *not for revenge, but to repair his reputation*. Or as Father Escobar hath expressed it (Letters Provincial, p. 143.) *One may lawfully kill another, who hath*
given

given him a box on the ear, though he run away for it, provided he do it not out of hatred or revenge. In short, that a man may do any evil to him that hath offered him an affront, in case he do it not out of malice, or to revenge himself upon him, but only to repair his credit, and defend his honour and reputation. But if this be true and Christian Doctrine, what shall we say to the Precept of Christ, *Mat. 5. 39. I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* That is to say, if any injury passed upon thee, leave thee secure of life and limbs, if it only touch thy reputation, as this is measured amongst men by vulgar judgments and opinions, do thou patiently bear the injury, and be content to expect a reward hereafter for it, whatsoever becomes of thy reputation.

In the mean time let it be observed, how the Teachers in the Church of *Rome* loosen the reins to the lusts of men, indulge their vain unchristian humors, while they teach them to value their reputation, and that in the eyes of vulgar Judges, more than the very lives of men. While they allow them

to preserve the esteem of vain men, by the spilling of their neighbours blood; as though his life were of less value than the opinion of such persons.

Two things further I shall observe: First, That this Doctrine of good intention, justifying actions of this kind, is in effect no other than that, of *doing of evil that good may come*; or of the using of evil means for the attaining a good end. A Doctrine most severely censured, *Rom. 3. 8.* And then further, that a good intention justifies an indifferent action, a thing that is lawful in it self; but never justifies things unlawful. In these things it hath no place, but in indifferent things it hath.

Now then to conclude what I have to say, seeing evil Principles do not only leave us exposed to sin, but also encourage us thereunto, seeing they expose us to death eternal by so doing; let us have a care of such persons, and such a Church as teach and promote such Principles. Let us be steadfast in that Church where the saving Doctrine of Christianity is faithfully taught and offered to us. We have no other certain helps against the most pernicious evils, to secure us from the foulest sins, but
firm

firm Principles, Faith and Holiness, assisted by the Grace of God. These are the things that must preserve us against our natural inclinations, against our depraved and corrupt affections ; these are the things that must secure us against the temptations of the world, and recover us, if we chance to fall through humane frailty and infirmity. He that commits a sin by Principles, hath nothing to retrieve him from it, and to recover him from his fall, while such a Principle remains in him. But he that falls through inadvertency, may be soon recovered by good Principles. He will remember he hath done amiss, his conscience will check and smite him for it ; these checks will send him to his prayers to beg the pardon of what is past, and a greater vigilance, a greater assistance of Gods Grace for time to come, and so recover him from his fall, and restore him to his former station.

And therefore let it be our care to govern our lives by stable principles of integrity : In doubtful cases let us always follow the safer part, and not do as they of the Church of *Rome* ; forsake a safer to follow a more unsafe opinion. And where the case is plain and obvious,

ous, that it is unlawful to do a thing; let us not cheat our own reason with any deceitful arts and reasonings, to make it seem to be lawful for us. If we do this, we expose our selves to the guile and Sophistry of our lusts, and may make the plainest things obscure. But if we heartily love the truth, and use no means to contradict it, it will be a faithful guide unto us in this life, and so conduct us to life eternal.

How many are there that are so far from believing Schism to be a sin, that they value themselves upon this account, and believe themselves the only Saints, because they separate from the Church, make that a Character of Religion which tends to its ruine and destruction?

The



The Fifth Sermon.

Matth. 16. 18.

And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

The whole verse is thus:

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

ST. Peter having in the 16 verse of this Chapter made this confession of our Lord, That he was *Christ the Son of the living God*, is in return for this confession first pronounced a blessed person, and then adorned with an excellent Character by our Saviour. He is pronounced a blessed person at the 17 verse, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* He is adorned with an excellent Character in the words immediately

mediately following those, *And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church*, which privilege although it was not peculiar unto S. Peter, but common to the other Apostles with him, yet being first declared of him, adds to the Dignity of his Character, and yet detracts nothing at all from the power of the rest of Christs Apostles, upon whom, as upon a sure foundation S. Paul assures us the Church was built, *Ephe. 2. 20.* It was built on them together with him, whom our Saviour mentions in this place, it was most firmly built upon them, for so it appears from these words; *and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* For the better understanding of which words we must,

(1) consider that *adns*, translated *Hell* is frequently used in the holy Scriptures as well as prophane Authors to signifie the grave, to denote the place, and state of the dead; so it is used in these words, *Psal. 16. 10. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.* And then further,

(2) We must consider, that the grave, or place and State of the dead
is

is sometimes compared unto a house, *If I wait, the grave is mine house*, Job. 17. 13. and to a house with gates, or dores shut up and locked with bars and locks, and hence that saying of *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 10. *I said in the cutting off of my days I shall go to the gates of the grave*. Hence mention is made of the *bars of the pit*, Job. 17. 16. and of the *keys of hell and death*, Revel. 1. 18. and of the *keys of the bottomless pit*, Revel. 9. 1.

(3) Being then that the *grave*, being that the place and state of the dead is compared to a house with gates and doors, shut up and fastned with bars and locks; from hence likewise it comes to pass, that Death or Destruction is described by entering into the gates of the grave; for so you find in the words which I have already cited, *Isaiah* 38. 10. 11. *I said in the cutting off of my days (when God told me that I should dye) I shall go to the gates of the grave I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world, where [entering into the gates of the grave] plainly signifies death.* it self, or entring

entring into the place of the dead, as all the other expressions shew.

(4.) This being so; if the *Church* be taken for Gods people, not considered as a Society being together in Communion, but as single Members of Christs Body; then these words that are before us, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church*, imply no more, than that the Members of Christs body shall overcome death and the grave by a Resurrection to Immortality. But then if the Church in this place be taken, as it usually is, and as I judge it ought to be, for the general Society of Believers considered as they are a Church, living together in Communion in the use of all Christ's Institutions; then are the words we have in hand (which tell us, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church*) a promise that there shall be a Church professing the true Faith of the Gospel, and living in the use of its Institutions, in visible Fellowship and Communion, till the second Coming of our Lord.

Then when it is said, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church*; the meaning will be, that the Church shall never enter into those
I gates,

gates, which is as much as if it were said, that it should never be destroyed.

Having thus interpreted the words before us, I shall proceed in this Method.

1. I shall shew what Church this is, which is designed in these words.

2. And then secondly, how far this promise of our Lord made to that Church in these words, secures it from error and defection.

1. It is needful to understand what the Church is, which is designed in these words, where it is promised, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

And the reason is, because the Patrons of the *Roman Church* have assumed this promise unto themselves with as much confidence and presumption, as if it had been expressly said, That the Church of *Rome* should never fail, but always continue firm and stable, nay absolutely infallible in the Faith, in the true Doctrine of Christianity; whereas in truth, this is as well a great arrogance as a most wide and foul mistake.

For certain it is, that our Saviour here speaks not of any particular Church planted in this or the other place, but only

only of the Universal Church, the whole Society of those persons who profess the Doctrine of the Gospel. He speaks *indefinitely* of his Church, *Upon this rock will I build my Church*; and speaking indefinitely of his Church, cannot possibly understand any particular part of it, the Church of any particular place, but the Catholick Universal Church.

The truth is, the Church of any particular place, seated in any particular Country, may utterly fail, and be extinguished. How many great and excellent Churches have failed and perished long ago? How many others have so decayed, that they seem near unto destruction? Where are those many famous Churches which once flourished in the Coast of *Africk*? Where are those seven Churches of *Asia* largely mentioned by St. John in the three first Chapters of the *Revelations*? Where are those many other Churches which formerly flourished in the East? How many of them are extinguished? utterly ruined and destroyed with the very Cities where they were planted? How many others are decayed almost to a total dissolution? Be it then concluded, that this promise, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the*
1 2
Church,

Church, belongs to the Church Universal only, and not to any Society of Christians, seated in any particular place, not unto any particular Church. Which being so, I cannot dismiss this point without an Inference and a Caution.

1. The Inference is, That seeing this promise of our Lord, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church*, belongs to the Church Universal, and not to any particular Church. The consequence which the Romanists draw from these words, namely, that *the Church of Rome is indefectible and infallible*, is most inconsequent and unreasonable. This promise belongs to the whole Church, of which the present Church of *Rome* is but a part, and a part infected with strange corruptions. This promise belongs to the Universal Church of Christ, the Church of *Rome* was never more than only a particular Church, that is, a member of the universal; and is now, what it hath long been, a most corrupt and unsound member. And as that Church hath strangely sunk into heathenish and barbarous Superstitions, so may it utterly fail and vanish, and disclaim the very name of Christ, and yet this promise of our Lord remain a
firm

firm and stable truth, That *the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.*

2. Seeing that this promise belongs to the Church Universal only, and not to any particular Church; this may suggest a severe Caution to all particular Churches in the World, wheresoever they are fixed and planted, carefully to study their preservation, and duly to mind and use the means that may be effectual to that purpose. The promise of God doth not fail in the failing of any particular Church, seeing that no particular Church hath the warranty of any promise from him that it shall not cease to be a Church, and lose the profession of Christianity. If the Professors of Christianity in any particular place or Nation, shall become vain in their imaginations, exchanging plain and wholesome Truths for fond Speculations and Opinions; if they shall turn factious and schismatical, neglecting their spiritual Guides and Pastors; if they be dissolute in their manners, and confute their profession in their lives, they do in effect dissolve themselves, and break the bonds of their own communion, and what is more, provoke God to bring confusion and ruine upon them. They were these

The Fifth Sermon.

miscarriages that opened the way to the *Turks* and *Saracens* to overflow the *Eastern Churches*, and let *Mahometism* into the World. They were the same that brought that deluge of *Goths* and *Vandals*, and barbarous Nations upon the *West*: and what may happen upon our selves for the same miscarriages that are amongst us, the wisest man amongst us cannot tell, unless those evils be reformed, which plainly threaten destruction to us. • Sure I am, that Christ's Admonition to the Church of *Ephesus* may duly be applied to us: *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent* *Rev. 2. 5.* Christ is so far from promising safety and protection to any particular Church and People, where they neglect their own safety, where they wilfully violate his Laws, that he threatens destruction and ruine to them; and therefore it is no particular Church, but the Catholick or Universal Church, to which our Lord makes this promise, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* This being cleared,

2. Let us now proceed to the second point,

point, which is to consider how far this promise of our Lord made to the universal Church secures it from error, and defection.

1. And first of all, there is no doubt, but that it secures it from such errors, as destroy the foundation of Christianity, for wheresoever these prevail, the gates of Hell prevail in them, which is a contradiction to Christs promises made to his Church, in this place. Error in matters fundamental destroys the being of a Church, and therefore the promise which assures us, that there shall always be a Church, assures us there shall always be a society of Christians which shall not err in fundamentals, that is to say, which shall profess all Christian Doctrine absolutely necessary to salvation.

2. But then secondly, although this promise of our Lord secure the universal Church from error in fundamental points, yet I conceive, it doth not secure it from error in things not fundamental. I do not say, that the whole Church, the Church universal of any age, even since the Decease of Christs Apostles, hath actually erred even in things of less concernment. But

this I say, that this promise doth not secure it from such error. The reason is, because the Church may err in matters that are not fundamental, and yet continue a true Church: for as a particular or single person may be a true and real Christian, although he mistake in lesser matters, in such as do not appertain to the foundation of Christianity; so also may a Society of men be a true Church although they err in the like matters. Error in matters of less concernment doth no more destroy the being of a Church, than lesser irregularities in practice, and certainly such irregularities do not destroy the being of it. There was something of faction, and something of prophaneness also in the Church of *Corinth*, *one was of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas*, 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. And when they came to the *Lords Supper*, *one was hungry, and another was drunk*, and the rich despised and contemned the poor, 1 Cor. 11. 21 (which certainly were no small miscarriages) and yet *S. Paul* doth still acknowledge, that they were a true and real Church. And so he styles them, 1 Cor. 1. 2.

There were not many of the seven Churches

Churches whereunto S. *John* writes by the spirit, and in the name of Christ himself, as unto true Christian Churches, but had some considerable faults in them. For thus is our Lord brought in as speaking to the Church of *Ephesus*. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, &c. Revel. 2. 5. to the Church of *Pergamus*, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam. Revel. 2. 14. to the Church of *Thyatira*, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel which calleth her self a Prophetess to seduce my servants, &c. Revel. 2. 20. to the Church of *Sardis*, I have not found thy works perfect before God. Revel. 3. 2. to the Church of *Laodicea*, I would thou were cold or hot. so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (unless thou reform in due time.) Revel. 3. 16, 18. The summ is this, as there may be a true Church where there are defects in point of practice; so there may be a true Church also, where there are defects in point of truth, provided they be not in those truths which are fundamental to Christianity. And therefore since
this

this promise of Christ, *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church*, imports no more, but that there shall always be a true Church, it doth not secure the same Church from error in matters not fundamental. And now to reflect upon this point.

I. Hence we learn what it hath been that hath preserved the Church of Christ, and the Christian Faith in that Church, in all its several dangers and hazards in the several ages of Christianity, Namely, the faithfulness of our Lord to this his stable and gracious promise, *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church*, which faithfulness will appear more signal, if we shall make a short reflexion upon the several dangers and tryals that have in several and divers ages assaulted the Church, and Faith of Christ.

I. And first of all, when that Church and Faith did first appear, they were assaulted by persecution; by persecution from Jew and Gentile, and that both by the tongue and the sword, the Scribes and Pharisees amongst the Jews, the Philosophers also amongst the Gentiles, bent all their wit, to confute the Faith; and the higher powers, the
Princes

ees and Potentates of the World exercised all external violence to destroy, and kill the professors of it. No reproaches were thought too foul to blacken, no tortures too cruel to destroy the professors, of the Gospel of Christ, for the three first ages of Christianity, inso-much that they had but little time to breathe in the intervals of persecution, while they continued under heathen Emperours.

2. No sooner did the supreme power owne the profession of Christianity, no sooner did peace dawn upon the Church by the favour of *Constantine* the Great, but that the professors of Christianity broke and divided amongst themselves. Then was the Church as much troubled by the Errours and Heresies, by the Schisms and Factions of them that professed the name of Christ, as it had been in former ages by the open violence of persecution. 'Tis true indeed, there had been Errours, there had been factions amongst the Christians before that time, but now they grew to greater height, especially concerning the person of Christ; for the repressing of which errors, the four first general Councils were called.

3. Next

3. Next after the mutual strifes that arose among the Professors of the Gospel, they fell into the sleep of ignorance, dark and stupid, and profound ignorance, which began in the sixth and seventh Ages, and continued for divers Ages together. And then it was, that all the follies and superstitions entred into the Christian Church, which are still retained in the Church of *Rome*. Then were Images set up in Churches, and great Veneration given to them; then came in the Invocation of Saints, then the Adoration of Angels also, then the opinion of Transubstantiation, then infinite forgeries of Epistles, forgeries of large and great Volumes, fictions of the Lives of Saints, fictions of the Miracles done by them, to advance the Glory of the Church of *Rome*: which were no sooner disclaimed and baffled by the Reformation that still continues, but they of that Church presently fell to practise the very same cruelties, the same bloody Arts upon the Reformed, that the Heathen Emperours had formerly practised upon the whole Church of God. Such were the methods that have been used to prevail against the Church of Christ, violence from without, divisions

sions within, the troubles of danger, the temptations of ease, all the cruelties and arts of Satan to bring confusion and ruine upon it; and yet behold it still continues, and will continue in the world, either in one place or another, by virtue of the promise of Christ, *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.*

2. Seeing that Christ our Lord hath made it the matter of a promise, *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church*; that is to say, that there shall always be a Society professing the Faith of Christianity, and living together in communion in the use of all Christs Institutions, this may serve for an admonition to all Christians to study Unity amongst themselves, to make no breach in the Church of Christ, where it is possible to keep together with piety and good conscience. He that promised there should be a Church to the end of the world, promised the unity and Christian communion of its members amongst themselves; without this there is no Church. And he that doth any thing directly tending to break this unity and communion, doth what is in him to frustrate the very promise of Christ,

Christ, and to destroy that Church which he hath founded upon a rock. In the mean time I must profess, that I am much more than well satisfied in our separation from the Church of *Rome*, or rather in their separation from us, and from the Catholick Church it self, by their infinite variations from it. But on the other hand, I cannot but tremble to think of the many grievous divisions amongst them, that are divided from the Church of *Rome*. These, if not timely cured and removed, will certainly bring confusion amongst us, and then will that old Enemy enter in the smoke and darkness of that confusion. I wonder to see how little regard, how little value many men have for the preservation of peace amongst us. I wonder to see what little exceptions, what groundless cavils are made pretences to separate from us. Certain it is, that these men are infinitely wanting either in knowledge, or sincerity. If they do not understand, that the peace of the Church is a thing of most important value for the preservation of Faith, and love, and the very essence of Christianity; if they do not understand how weak and trifling all their Arguments against us are,
and

and that it is next to an impossibility to find a Church against which nothing shall be objected: if they do not understand all these things, they are guilty of very great ignorance; but if they do understand these things, and yet persist in separation, they are guilty of equal insincerity.

The duty of every good Christian in these distractions and divisions, that so much trouble the Christian World, is to put up constant prayers to God, and also to use his best endeavours for the peace of the whole Church of Christ. They are short sighted in Christianity, and very mean and narrow spirited, that mind or study peace no further than concerns a particular Congregation, nay the Church of any particular Nation. Christ hath a care of his whole body, and requires an unity and communion not only of the particular Members of any Church, but of all particular Churches also. These make up the Catholick Church, and the Catholick Church is Christs body. *There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all,*

all, and in you all, Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6.

There is, saith he, one body, one universal Church, the unity and the peace whereof he recommends unto our study. Now therefore study the peace and unity of this Church as much as possibly lies in you; adorn it by your Faith and Piety, labour its purity and its peace. For to this end did Christ our Lord give himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blemish, Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27.

The

The Sixth Sermon.

1 Cor. 14. 15.

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.

OUR Blessed Lord having a while before his death promised his Apostles another comforter who should for ever abide with them. John, 14. 16. that is to say, the spirit of truth to lead them into all truth; renews this promise again unto them a little before his ascension into Heaven, Act. 14. and commands not to depart from Jerusalem, but there to wait for the promise of the Father; And long it was not before this promise was fulfilled, and that in a very signal manner, for when they were assembled together on the day of Pentecost, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like

like as of fire, and it sate upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2. 2, 3, 4. which same Spirit also then endued them with all other kinds of gifts and powers requisite for the infallible preaching, and sure confirmation of the Gospel. And as these miraculous gifts and powers were now bestowed upon the Apostles; so afterwards on great numbers of other Christians. First on those that were Jews by birth, as you may see, *Act. 4. 3. & 8. 17.* and afterwards on the Gentiles also, as it appears from what we read *Act. 10. 44.*

Then came it to pass that all the Churches wherein the Faith of Christ was planted, much abounded with such persons as had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; but no where were there more of these than in the famous Church of Corinth, which as it was zealous of these gifts (*1 Cor. 14. 12*) so had it a plentiful measure of them, as plainly appears from the 13 Chapter of this Epistle.

Upon this account the Apostle directs them in this Chapter how they should use these spiritual gifts, Namely, for the

the edifying of the Church: so you read
 vers. 12. *for as much as ye are zealous
 of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel
 to the edifying of the Church, and be-
 cause the Church could not be edified
 by any thing uttered in an unknown
 tongue, unless interpreted in one that
 was known, he adds as follows vers. 13,
 14. wherefore let him that speaketh in an
 unknown tongue; pray that he may in-
 terpret; for if I pray in an unknown
 tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my under-
 standing is unfruitful, that is, my spiri-
 tual gift is exercised, but my under-
 standing is not exercised; so as to ren-
 der what I say intelligible and useful
 to other persons; which being so, he
 puts this question; *what is it then?*
 that is to say, what is the most desir-
 able thing? what should we desire in
 point of Prayer? to which he answers
 in these words, *I will pray with the spi-
 rit, and I will pray with the understanding
 also.* That is, the thing to be desired
 is, that when the Spirit suggests and
 dictates a prayer to any man (as he did
 to many in those ages by an immediate
 inspiration) he may so far use his own
 understanding, when he prays in a pub-
 lick congregation, as to utter the pray-*

er in a known tongue, and in easie and intelligible expressions, that others may be edified by it.

Now from these words compared with other places of Scripture, I shall take occasion to observe, That there were two ways of praying by the Spirit in the first Age of Christianity.

1. The first of these was extraordinary, as when the Spirit dictated a prayer by an immediate Inspiration.

2. The other ordinary, as when a man prayed heartily and fervently, but not by immediate Inspiration; but in the use of Faith and Hope, and all such other Christian Graces, as are the fruits of the holy Spirit, and the causes of holy and good affection.

1. The former of these, that is, the extraordinary gift of prayer seems to have been of two kinds likewise.

1. In the former whereof the understanding of him that prayed seems to have been wholly *passive*, so far as not to have employed it self, either in the inventing of the conceptions of the prayer, or in the uttering those conceptions in a tongue commonly understood. Such was the prayer the Apostle mentions *vers. 14.* of this Chapter, *If I*

pray

pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth (that is, the spiritual gift that is in me) *but my understanding is unfruitful*, that is to say, my understanding doth not imploy and exercise it self to expresse the conceptions of this prayer in a tongue or manner known to all them that hear me.

2. In the latter kind of this extraordinary gift of prayer, (prayer by immediate Inspiration) the understanding of him that prayed seems to have been *passive* and *active* likewise; passive so far, as to have received all the conceptions of the prayer from the immediate Inspiration of the Holy Ghost: active so far, as to have imployed and exercised it self to expresse and utter those conceptions in a tongue unknown to them that heard, and in a familiar easie manner. And such was the prayer the Apostle mentions in these words: *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also*. I will utter the very same conceptions, which the holy Spirit suggests to me; but I will use my understanding to utter them in a known tongue and in easie and familiar expressions.

Concerning both these several ways, I have something to observe unto you:

1. Concerning the first, wherein the understanding was wholly passive, wherein a man used both the gift of tongues, and received the conceptions of the prayer from an immediate Inspiration, I observe the Apostle did not allow the use of this in Christian Assemblies, unless that either the person that prayed, or else some persons present had the gift of interpreting what was said. The ground of which his determination was, that nothing was to be spoken in the Church, but what might edifie all that were present, even the most illiterate persons, and that such as these could not be edified by that which was uttered in an unknown tongue, though dictated by the holy Spirit, unless it was afterwards interpreted. *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also, i. e. so, that others may understand. And so should every man pray in the Church, else, says the Apostle, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how should he that occupieth the room of the unlearned (how should a vulgar illiterate person) say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understands not what thou sayest. For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified,*

fied, ver. 16, 17. So then the Apostles judgment is this, That no office is to be performed in the Church, but so, that all may be edified by it, that no man is edified by that which he doth not understand; and therefore that an unknown tongue was not to be used in the offices of the Church, unless there were some that could interpret. So he suggests at the 18, 19 verses: I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all, yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. So he more expressly concludes vers. 27, 28. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church.

Now here I cannot but observe the most insufferable contradiction of the practice of the Roman Church to the Apostles determination. The Apostle, you see, would not allow that the prayers of the Church should be uttered in an unknown tongue, but there they pray in a tongue unknown unto the people. The Apostle would not allow

this, no not in them who spake by immediate Inspiration: they practise contrary to the Apostles express Decree, and that where no such Inspiration can be pretended with the least appearance and shew of reason. The Apostle supposes no man edified by the prayers which he doth not understand, they either judge that a man may be edified by such prayers, or that they may be duly used, although the Church be not edified by them; both which expressly contradict the Apostle. If the Church of *Rome* be in the right, then the Apostle is mistaken: if the Apostle be not mistaken, the Church of *Rome* doth grossly erre in judging such prayers edifie, which *St. Paul* affirms cannot edifie, or in judging them fit to be used in the Church, although they do not edifie at all.

And is it not now a wonderful thing, that they who so grossly so expressly contradict the Doctrine of *St. Paul*, should boast themselves to be infallible? Is it not yet a greater wonder, that any who have had the education, where the Scriptures are read in a known tongue, should suffer themselves to be overborn into a belief that they are infallible,

fallible, who erre in so plain and clear an instance, and in a thing of such concernment?

Certainly, if men were not infatuated by most unreasonable lusts and passions, they would never apostatize, never adhere to such a Church as sound, nay infallible in all her Doctrines, who uses its publick Prayers and Offices in a tongue unknown unto the people, a thing so contrary to common sense, and to the practice of primitive times, and to what the Apostle himself teaches in as full, and clear, and express words, as any thing possibly can be spoken.

2. But to proceed to the second kind of the extraordinary gift of prayer, which was when a man received all the conceptions in prayer from an immediate Inspiration; but so far used his understanding, as to contrive the expression of them into a tongue known to them that heard him, and into plain and easie expressions in that tongue. Concerning this I must observe, that it was a gift of the Holy Ghost peculiar to the Apostles times, or at least to those that immediately followed, as the rest of those miraculous powers and gifts were, which God did then bestow on the Church

Church to confirm the truth of Christianity, I do not deny but that God doth still in some cases suggest to the minds of good men what is convenient for their condition, and what it is they should pray for. I do not deny, but that when they fall into such straits, as that they know not what it is best to pray for, God doth direct and guide their minds by the assistance of his Spirit. For as there is need of such assistance in such cases, so God denies not what is needful to such persons. And this is the meaning of the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought.* He speaks in this place of times of great distress and danger, when the Christians were often in such perplexities and doubts of mind, that they knew not what to pray for, at least with faith and resignation, entire resignation to Gods will. Now here it was, that the Spirit of God directed them to pray for such things, and in such a manner as might tend effectually to Gods glory, though to their sufferings in the world. And thus far, I doubt not may we expect the like assistance of Gods Spirit in the like cases, if we heartily pray for it.

But

BUT now for any man in these days to expect an immediate Inspiration of all the conceptions of a prayer, such as the Apostles and Prophets had in the primitive times of Christianity, for any man to pretend to pray by the same immediate Revelation, whereby they prayed in the Christian Churches, is a very groundless and great presumption. And therefore when you hear men pray with a great torrent and flow of words, you are not presently to imagine (as divers ignorant persons do) that such a man prays by an immediate Inspiration, that what he speaks is just then dictated and suggested by the Holy Ghost, as things were suggested to the Apostles, unless he could also speak with tongues, and heal the sick, and cure the lame, and in a word do such Miracles as they did, and give the same proof of his Inspiration, which they did evidently give of theirs: which is a thing that is not done by any that now pretend unto it, and therefore shews the pretence is vain, and the Pretender to be deceived, if not a cheat, and impostor likewise.

Is there then no way in these days, whereby a man may truly be said to pray by the Spirit, in the sense and language

guage of the Scriptures, and that in ordinary and common cases? Yes, that there is. For,

2. Such is that other way of praying, which I have before mentioned to you, which is, when a man prays in the use of Faith and Hope, and all the Graces of Gods Spirit, and with such pious and good affections, as are the effects of those Graces, though not by immediate Inspiration, that is to say, the immediate dictate of the Spirit. Such is the prayer our Saviour supposes in those words, *Joh. 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*, not carelessly and without attention, not without the affections of the heart and inward sense of the mind and spirit, as the Jews had worshipped him in former Ages; but fervently, heartily, and sincerely. Such is the prayer the Apostle mentions *Eph. 6. 18.* where he requires them to *pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*: that is, with spiritual and holy minds, with fervent and devout affections. Like whereunto was that singing also, which he represents in these words, *Speaking to your selves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making*

making melody in your hearts, Eph. 5. 19. Where you plainly see, that the holy offices, wherein the heart was moved and affected, are said to be *spiritual* on that account. See also *Col. 3. 16.* Now concerning this way of praying by the Spirit, wherein men pray in the use of Faith, and with real, and hearty, and devout affections, though not by immediate Inspiration, I shall observe several things.

1. That this way or manner of praying is grateful and acceptable to God. This is in truth such a worship of God as our Saviour himself did understand, when he said, that they that worship God must *worship him in spirit and truth.* This is the worship that God requires, and therefore this he accepts also. This is really prayer in Faith, in belief of the promises God hath made, and certainly God accepts such prayer. This is a prayer put up to God with devout, and humble, and holy affections (for so I state the nature of it) and such was that the Apostle required, *Eph. 6. 18.* and therefore supposed to be grateful to God, and so will every one believe, who knows that the heart is in such prayer, and that it is the heart which
God

God requires. And to say no more, such prayer as this, although it doth not proceed from an immediate Inspiration, a present dictate of the holy Spirit, yet is it the mediate effect of the Spirit, as being the effect of that Faith, that Hope, that Love, and Charity, and Humility, which is the fruit of the Spirit of God. It is the fruit of these Graces (and whatsoever else is of the same nature) and these are the fruits of the Spirit of God, Gal. 5. 22, 23.

2. The second thing which I must observe concerning this way of praying by the Spirit is, that it is applicable as a form of prayer. The words of Scripture are a form of words, and will any man say that he cannot read, or hear those words read unto him, and heartily believe what he hears, or reads, and be as heartily affected with it? If he cannot do this, let him confess that he doth not believe the Word of God when he hears it read, and that he is not being affected with it; but if he will not confess this, let him confess that faith and zeal, faith, and piety, and holy affections may be applied to a form of words, and consequently to a form of prayer.

3. Most of those persons who disallow

low a form of Prayer and thanksgiving to God, allow and practise a certain form in singing Psalms, and what are such Psalms but certain forms of Praying and rendering thanks to God? and if men can heartily pray to God in verse or meeter, why not in prose as well as in verse?

3. All the Protestant Churches of other Nations, all the Christians Churches in the World, have set forms for their publick Offices, and so hath the whole Church had for fourteen hundred Years at least; and therefore certainly it was, and is the sense of the universal Church, not only that it was very lawful, but most expedient and useful also, that the publick Offices of the Church should be performed in a set form, and that men might pray in a set form, and pray by the spirit at the same time, that is to say, in Faith, and Hope, and with holy, and devout affections.

4. Add herunto that there are divers forms of Prayer expressly prescribed in the holy Scripture, a form of benediction, whereby the Priest was to bless the People, *Num. 6. 23, 24, 25, 26.* a form for the offering of the first-fruits,

fruits, *Deut.* 26. 5, 6. &c. That *David* composed many of the *Psalms* (as the titles of them expressly shew) to be used as publick forms of Prayer in the solemn worship of God in the Temple. That our Saviour himself gave that, which is called the *Lords Prayer*, as a form of Prayer to his Disciples, according to the custome of the Jewish Doctors, and *John the Baptist*, who did the like for their Disciples. Now had it not been a possible thing for men to use a form of Prayer with faith and zeal, and holy affections (as every man always ought to pray) we should have had no forms of Prayer expressly prescribed in the holy Scripture,

5. And to conclude the present point, were not faith, and zeal, and devout affections applicable to a form of Prayer, no man could heartily joyn in a Prayer, which he hears uttered by another person, for all such prayers, whatsoever they be to him that speaks, are certain forms to them that hear them; to them they as are limited forms when they are spoken, as if they had been printed; and read; for the words are still the very same. and all the sense contained in them. And so I conclude the
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second observation, that is, that a man may pray by the spirit, that is, in Faith and holy Zeal, and pray by a Form at the same time.

3 I must further observe unto you, that as the way of Praying by the Spirit is applicable to a form of Prayer, so that it ought in very truth to be applied to every Prayer we make to God, whether it be with, or without a form; God hears no Prayers, accepts no service offered to him, where there is no attention of mind, no Zeal, and Affection in the heart. It is a great neglect of God, a dangerous irreverence to our Maker not to attend to what we speak, or what is spoken in our name, when we make our addresses to him by Prayer: doth any man speak unto a Prince, not minding what he speaks unto him? doth any man make an address to a King without giving heed to his own address? and if we judge it a great irreverence to speak to a Prince without attending to what we speak, what shall we judge of that affront men do to God, when they attend not to those Prayers, which they themselves offer to God, or are offered by others in their names, in their presence and behalf?

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And then for Faith, and Zeal, and Fervour, these are the very life of Prayer, Prayer is but sound and noise without them. Men may pray, and pray acceptably, where they do not utter express words, *Rom. 8. 26.* but the most excellent words in the World are not true and real Prayer, where there is nothing of desire, nothing of affection added to them; *Confess your faults one to another, saith S. James, cap. 5. 16. and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* 'Tis the fervent Prayer that is effectual, the effectual Prayer that is useful to us; and who can wonder that God should not hear those Petitions, which are void of affection, and desire? if we our selves neglect our Prayers, those very Prayers we seem to make, how much more will God neglect them? why should he grant what we our selves do not desire? especially since it is an affront, a mocking of God, to ask of him what in truth we do not really desire, what we have no mind to receive from him; which is indeed the very case, when our Prayers have nothing of attention, nothing of zeal and affection in them. What then

then shall we say to all that coldness, all that remissness which appears in our publick and solemn worship of God? By this we lose those spiritual joys, those sensible warmths and feeling comforts, which always attend fervent Prayer, and tend to the strengthening of Faith and Hope and all other Virtues and Christian Graces. By this we fail of Gods acceptance, and of gaining the things we ask of him. By this we give scandal to other persons, who take occasion from our remissness and want of zeal in our addresses unto God, either to refuse to joyn with us, or despise the worship of God in General.

See then how highly we are concerned to awake into a sense of God, to stir up our selves to a greater exercise of Faith, and Zeal, and holy affections in all our addresses unto God. Think who it is, *in whom you live, in whom you move, and have your beings*; think who it is, who is the donor of all good things relating to this, or a better life; think of your own dayly wants, and of the numerous harms and dangers, the many temptations and seductions, you are every day exposed unto; and think how justly God may expose and give

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you up, either to those dangers or temptations; unless you constantly apply unto him by fervent Prayers and Supplications for his protection and assistance, for his good Spirit to guide and help you, to enlighten your minds, to cleanse your hearts, to purge your affections, to order your ways, and so to conduct you to Life Eternal.

The



The Seventh Sermon.

I Joh. 3. 3.

*And every man that hath his hope in him,
purifieth himself even as he is pure.*

THE Apostles speaking to such persons as laboured under many trials and great indignities in the world, are always wont to put them in mind of two things, *first* of love of God to them under their sufferings and persecutions, and *then* that these very persecutions are a signification of this love. So this Apostle begins this Chapter: *Behold, saith he, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* And lest he should seem to impose upon them by meer words, to court them with an empty title, while he saith they were *called the sons of God*; he further adds, that they were really and truly so; for so he proceeds in the

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second verse, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* And that they might further understand the great advantage of this relation, he adds to this, as it there follows, *and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear (or as some others read the words) when it shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, we shall enjoy him in that Glory wherein he appears in Heaven it self to those that are admitted thither. We shall see him not through a glass darkly, but we shall see him face to face.* From whence it follows, that we shall be like him both in purity and immortality, seeing that none that are not so, can possibly so enjoy or see him.

And then that the promise of this Glory might prove effectual for its end, by moving every man to imitate him in this world, whom he hopes to enjoy in that to come, *to purifie himself as God is pure*; he lets them know the mighty power of the very hope of enjoying God in immortal Glory in order to a holy life. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he is pure.* Where I shall not need to put you in mind that these words, *purifieth himself*

as he is pure, design and express an imitation, not an equality of Gods holiness and perfection: the latter of these is wholly impossible to every creature, the former necessary for every person that seriously aims at immortality. Nor shall I stand to divide the words into any small minute parts, lest by insisting upon them, I should, as it happens in such cases, lose or obscure the sense of the whole, and trifle away the design of them.

And therefore omitting useless care and curiosity, I shall consider,

1. The nature of this Hope, which is said to purifie them that have it.

2. And then secondly, the several ways whereby it hath this effect upon them.

3. To which I shall add some considerations as consequences of the words before us, and the discourse I shall make upon them.

1. And first of all it will be requisite to observe the nature of this Hope, which purifies men as God is pure; seeing there are some kinds of hope, and those of future bliss and happiness that have no such influence upon men; as to purge and cleanse them from their.

lusts, but rather to move them to indulge them. We plainly find there are great numbers, who profess the hope of future Glory, we have no reason to imagine but that they really hope for it according to their own profession, and yet experience clearly shews, that it hath not this effect upon them, which the Apostle here describes, they still continue in their sins. From whence it appears this hope of theirs is not that which is here designed, it wants the efficacy and success, and therefore also the nature of it.

What then is the hope, which our Apostle here designs? A firm expectation of gaining that happiness which God hath promised, consisting in Purity and Immortality, upon the terms whereupon 'tis promised; and by the assistance of his Grace, which he will not deny them that ask it. This is stiled a hope ἐπ' αὐτῶν, for the words *in him* respect not the person possessed with, but God upon whom it is fixed and settled; a hope deficient in any of these will not purifie them that have it. A hope that is not so deficient must of necessity be thus qualified.

1. It must be an expectation of that
happi-

happiness which God hath promised.

2. It must be an expectation of it upon the terms whereupon 'tis promised.

3. It must be a firm; and not a wavering expectation.

4. It must be a firm expectation of it, that is to say, of attaining to it by the assistance of Gods Grace, and not by the power or strength of Nature. This is the nature, these the conditions of that hope that purges the hearts, and reforms the lives, and consequently saves the souls of men; no other kind of hope will do it.

1. It must be an expectation of that very happiness God hath promised, consisting in the enjoyment of God in perfect purity and immortality. The hope of a carnal sensual Paradise would never purge and cleanse the spirit, but on the contrary defile and stain it. For although it be very true indeed, that a man may possibly deny himself one sensual pleasure in the expectation of another, greater than that he foregoes at present; yet is it a thing wholly impossible, that the hope of any sensual happiness should any way mortifie sensuality. He that makes any sensual pleasure the very end and design of life, and
hopes

hopes for this as for his happiness, can never by virtue of this hope study to mortifie and subdue sensual appetites and inclinations : from whence it appears, that that hope which shall deliver and purge the soul from sensual and corrupt desires, must be a hope of such a happiness as God hath promised, namely the fruition of God himself in purity as well as immortality.

2. Nor is it sufficient for this end, that it be a hope of the very happiness God hath promised, unless it expect that happiness upon those terms and no other, whereupon 'tis promised in the Gospel; and those are *faith working by love*, those are, as God himself declares, *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world*. Whence that of the Author to the Hebrews, Chap. 12. vers. 14. *Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. He that hopes for happiness without these terms, cannot by virtue of that hope be any way moved to practise these; so far is such a hope as that, from moving men unto their duties, that it gives them the very greatest encouragement to live in the perfect neglect of them. What need

need they to deny themselves, and their vicious appetite and desires? What need they to offer any violence to their sinful lusts and inclinations? Why should they part with a right hand, why should they pluck out a right eye, forego the pleasure, lose the profit of any lust, if they can hope for eternal Glory in the fruition of their lusts, and reconcile the hopes of Heaven with all the desires of flesh and blood, and soft indulgence to those desires? From whence I conclude, that that hope, which purges the hearts and lives of men, must be a hope of that happiness that God hath promised upon those terms, and those only, whereupon 'tis promised in the Gospel.

3. And yet further we must observe, that it is only a firm assurance of arriving at that eternal happiness upon the performance of those terms, that shall enable us to perform them. Conjecture is too weak a thing to overcome those strong temptations, that dare men into sin and folly. No man will deny himself what he feels to gratifie his sensual appetites at the present, upon meer *guess* of what may possibly be hereafter. Strong desires are not subdued by weak hopes.

hopes. Men will not deny their present ease, their present pleasures; their present joys, though never so contrary to the Gospel; upon meer probabilities and peradventures; they will be sure of something future, before they part with what they have; they will be sure of something better, before they forsake what they feel or apprehend to be good and useful at the present. And it was want of this *assurance* in the Philosophy of former days that made its Precepts and Institutions so ineffectual in the World, and so *Lactantius* then observed. *Omnia ibi conjecturis aguntur, & ideo nemo paret, quia nemo vult in incertum laborare.* Philosophy affords but meer conjecture in the point of future life and happiness, and therefore no man observes its precepts, because no man will labour at all adventures. From whence I conclude, that that hope which shall effectually perswade with men to obey the Precepts of our Lord, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, must be a firm and strong *assurance* of gaining the happiness God hath promised upon the terms that he requires, sincere obedience to his Precepts.

4. But now because it is impossible
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for flesh and blood in this degenerate state of man, and in the midst of these temptations, which daily assault him in this state, sincerely to obey those Precepts without the assistance of Gods Spirit; there is yet a further qualification that is required in that hope which shall enable us so to do, which is, that it wholly grounds it self upon the promise of Gods grace, and moves a man to apply to God for the assistance and help thereof in the purifying of his heart and life. Nature will never raise it self to a supernatural state of life, or to a supernatural end. Man is of the earth earthy, and in no capacity so to elevate his own thoughts, so to advance his own desires, as to prepare and fit himself for that happiness which lies in likeness to God himself, in perfect purity and incorruption, without the assistance of Gods grace. And therefore that hope must of necessity be successless, must fail to cleanse and purge our hearts, to purifie us as God is pure, which shall not be so far instructed as to teach us to apply to God for the assistance of his Spirit in a work above the power of Nature.

But now (to recollect the sum of what

what I have said upon this point) that hope which fixes on that happiness which God hath promised in the Gospel, consisting in purity and immortality; which is a hope of this happiness upon those terms, and those only, whereupon it is there promised to us; which is a firm and full assurance of that happiness upon the performance of those terms; which grounds it self upon the assistance of Gods Spirit in that performance (and therefore moves to apply to God by fervent prayer for the attaining of that assistance, which is never denied when so desired) that is the hope the Apostle intends in these words, that is, the *hope that purifies us as God is pure*. Which leads me to the second general.

2. Where I am to shew the several ways, whereby it hath these effects upon us, and these I refer to two particulars.

1. This hope moves and excites to strong endeavours in order unto this end, namely the purifying of our selves.

2. It is of such a nature as cannot but render those endeavours truly effectual unto that end.

1. It moves to strong endeavours in order unto this great design which is the purify-

purifying of our selves from all our inordinate lusts and passions ; and the reason is, because it hath firmly fixed the soul upon future glory and immortality, as its only happiness and perfection, the only thing that is fit or worthy to be made the end and design of life, and also fixt and settled this as a most sure and certain truth, that the purifying of a mans heart and life, according to the Laws of Christ, is the only and certain way of attaining to that bliss and happiness. God hath made us all of such a nature, that we cannot forbear to love our selves, nor can that creature forbear to desire his own happiness, that cannot forbear to love himself; nor can the desires of that enjoyment, wherein a man hath placed his happiness, cease to urge and press endeavours in order to the attainment of it.

Suppose we then that a man believe that true happiness lies in the purity and immortality, that God hath promised in his Kingdom ; suppose he believe that a holy life is the only means to attain this happiness ; suppose these things fixed and settled upon his heart by the operation of Gods Spirit ; can we imagine but that the hope of such an end should
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most effectually excite and move him to purifie himself as God is pure?

Will he not be content to resist his sinful lusts and appetites, subdue his inordinate inclinations, in consideration of such a happiness? Will he not be content to deny himself all the unlawful joys and pleasures, all the poor and mean advantages that any sin can offer to him in the stedfast view and hope of it?

Will he think any loss or disadvantage that a holy life can bring upon him, to be compared with the loss of it? Will he think it much to suffer the loss of wealth, or honour, or life it self, rather than that of eternal glory, if he cannot retain the possession of one without plain forfeiture of all his title to the other? If he must abandon one of these, can he doubt whether he shall reject? and that under full and clear conviction wrought by the very grace of God (which we suppose in this hope) that he cannot retain them both together? I may boldly say, supposing the things I have supposed in this hope, he can no more refuse to do, or yet suffer whatsoever can be proposed unto him in this life, rather than forfeit that to
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come, than he can put off humane nature, than he can cease to be a man, and forbear to desire his own happiness. The stable hopes of Eternal Glory, of the fruition of Gods presence in perfect purity and immortality, will recommend that purity to him as an essential part of happiness and felicity; it will also teach him to do and suffer whatsoever is requisite to obtain so great a happiness and felicity. *Thus Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Ægypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward,* Heb. 11. 26,

So Christ himself for that joy *that was set before him* endured the Cross despising the shame, Heb. 12. 2. So did S. Stephen part with his life in view of the glory which he saw, *Acts* 7. 6. and that with such content and charity, that he prayed for the very men that stoned him, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge.* So did the rest of Christs followers in the Primitive Ages of Christianity rather chuse to part with their very lives, as well as their other advantages in the World, than with their title to future Glory. They all judged as S. Paul did, *the suffering of this present*

sent time were not worthy to be compared with the Glory that should be revealed in them, Rom. 8. 18. which is a sufficient demonstration what strong endeavours, to do and suffer the will of God, and that in very greatest tryals, flow from the firm and stable hopes of future bliss and immortality.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that the nature of that hope is such, as that it doth not only move to such endeavours, but likewise carries that in it which cannot but render them efficacious in the subduing every lust, in the producing of every grace, in the accomplishing every thing requisite unto Life Eternal.

For besides, that the hope I have described is always quickned and encouraged by the operation of Gods Spirit, which makes it powerful for the purifying of mens hearts and lives; it takes the very force and sting out of all the temptations of this World, whether they lye in the good or evil, in the hopes or fears of things below.

1. It destroys the force of those temptations, that arise from wealth, and power, and honour, from sensual pleasures, and satisfactions, by raising the thoughts

thoughts and desires of men, and transferring them to the things above. So it subdues those Capital Lusts, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life*, Sensuality, Avarice, and Ambition, and all the spawn of these Vices, Fraud, Oppression, and Revenge, Envy, Malice, and Animosity. So it begets the Graces contrary to all these Vices, Charity, Purity, and Humility. For no man that hath placed his hope upon Eternal Life and Glory as his only happiness and felicity, as his supreme and sovereign good, can so esteem the perishing pleasures, the fading profits of this World, as to envy those that abound in them, or despise those that have them not; much less to deceive, or to oppress, to lie, or flatter, or dissemble, to defame, or reproach his Neighbour, to do an injury, or deny a favour to attain them. And hence it is that this hope makes men plain, and simple hearted, makes them merciful, kind, and gentle, makes them pure and heavenly minded. It elevates the mind, raises the thoughts, enlarges the heart, alters the frame of mans nature, and makes him imitate that God, in whom he hath settled all his trust,

and in conformity to whose likeness with the enjoyment of his presence, he hath placed all his joy and happiness. And thus doth the hope of this happiness raise him above the force and power of those temptations, that the profits or pleasures of this world can offer or suggest unto him.

2. Nor is it any thing less effectual in securing him from the loss of innocence by those that arise from the evils of it, reproach or poverty, or death it self, or any of those many calamities which may assault him in the world. He knows these things cannot deprive him of that glory, wherein he hath placed all his happiness; he knows they will shortly have an end: in the mean time he is content rather to suffer all the evils that the present world can bring upon him, than the loss of the hope of life eternal. This hope gives him strength and courage, it gives him patience and resignation to his will, from whom he expects eternal glory, and an increase of that glory, as a reward for all his patience and perseverance in well doing under all his sufferings in the world. Besides, that God never fails to bless and strengthen those persons that patiently suffer
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his will with the joys and comforts of his Spirit ; as the Apostle himself assures us, *Rom. 5. 2, 3, and following verses, We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, and not so only, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience hope and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.*

The summ is this, the stable hope of eternal glory in the fruition of God himself in perfect purity and immortality, renders the man possessed with it, so indifferent to this world, as to pursue and to enjoy the good of it with great sobriety and moderation, without sensuality, fraud, or injury, without animosity, pride, or envy, with purity, gentleness, and Christian charity. It renders him so indifferent to it, as to endure the evil of it with constancy, patience, and perseverance, in all simplicity and integrity. By these he is so endeared to God, that as he before gave him the assistance of his Spirit, so he gives him now the joys thereof in the testimony of his love to him ; which love still further excites a mutual love to God, and also to men for his sake :

and by these means further improves all his graces, and purifies him as God is pure ; which is the second of those generals which I propounded to consider.

And now to conclude with some reflections upon the words.

I. If every man that hath this hope, purifie himself as God is pure, then first of all hence it appears, that whosoever doth not this, whosoever indulges his sinful lusts, hath not really that hope, as it hath been described unto you, he either hopes for nothing at all after this life, or for another kind of happiness than that is, which God hath promised, or to gain it without a holy life, or so to live without the assistance of Gods grace and application to God for it, or he reels and staggers in his hope, and is not firm and stable in it. Some or other of these defects do always attend that hope, which doth not purifie and reform the lives, and hearts, and spirits of men ; and that which I take to be the general and great defect in those that profess the Christian Faith is, that they hope for life eternal without performing those conditions, whereupon it is promised in the Gospel, namely, repen-

repentance and reformation.

Although there be scarce one single page in the whole Gospel, wherein it is not expressly said, or clearly implied, that no man shall ever be admitted into eternal bliss and glory, who doth not yield sincere obedience to Christs precepts, and purifie himself as God is pure ; yet will they not see what is most visible, they will not believe what is revealed, they will trust to a fruitless, liveless Faith, or to some Penances, and Satisfactions, and Commutations made with God, doing what he hath not required instead of what he hath commanded. No persuasions shall prevail to move and excite them to do this, no reasons, arguments, or demonstration, no not the express words of God, that it is necessary to be done ; or to forbear to censure them as enemies to the grace of God, who do with clear and express Scripture shew the absolute necessity of it. They blindly and wilfully shut their eyes to the light that shines as clear as day in the very Oracles of God himself, and so they stumble, and fall, and perish, and brand, and revile all those persons, who refuse to erre and perish with them.

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2. But secondly, if every man that hath the hope before described, purifie himself as God is pure:

Hence we learn the great advantage the Gospel gives us for the purifying of our hearts and lives. For it hath given the firmest reasons to settle that very hope upon, and qualifie it with the very conditions which may make it useful and efficacious to purge and cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. The Gospel hath promised eternal glory upon these conditions; and no other; it hath also promised the Spirit of God to them that ask it, to enable them to yield sincere obedience to Christs precepts, that is, to perform those conditions. The Gospel hath given firm foundations of that true and powerful hope, which, where it is, never fails to purge the impure, to humble the proud, to soften the hard, and bring them to eternal happiness.

3. But what then? what if the Gospel have done this? done it to infinite satisfaction to all that believe and entertain it. Why then, *take heed of departing from the living God by an evil heart of unbelief. Take heed lest a promise being left you of entring into eternal rest, any of*
you

you should come short of it. Fix your hope on eternal glory, but hope not for it on other terms than those whereupon it is promised to you, than in obedience to our Lord, than in conformity to Gods image, than in imitation of that God of whom you expect and hope for it. Fix and settle this kind of hope in the very bottom of your hearts, and when you have done, use it in every part of your lives, and live by the power and virtue of it. Ask its counsel in all the temptations that any forbidden joys or pleasures, any unlawful gains or profits offer to you, and it will confute and resist them all; it will not suffer you to embrace a trifle, a shadow, a perishing vanity instead of eternal life and glory. Ask its counsel in all the temptations whereby the dangers of the world may attempt your innocence and integrity, and it will resist them also, and make you chuse rather to suffer the greatest evils in this life with patience, courage, and perseverance in your duties, than lose your part in Gods Kingdom. It will subdue and overcome all the inordinate desires and appetites of the fruitions of this world. It will remove the fears and
dreads

dreads of all its sufferings and calamities. It will make you sober, just, and holy. It will make you wise, and strong, and patient. It will establish you in obedience, and place and settle you in that Kingdom, which is in *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

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The Eighth Sermon.

Galat. 5. 13.

We have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

Although the Law given by *Moses* was so heavy a yoke upon the Jews, that they themselves, who were otherwise apt to glory in it, sometimes complained of the burden of it, saying, *What a weariness is it?* *Malach. I. 13.* Yet were there some of the very Gentiles, and these converted to Christianity, who were willing enough to embrace that yoke, which the Jews themselves were not able to bear. *S. Paul* had no sooner planted the Gospel amongst the *Galatians*, a Colony of *Gauls* seated in *Asia*; but there arose some false Apostles amongst these Converts to Christianity, who taught the necessity of Circumcision, pretending they could not be saved without it, and so successful

The Eighth Sermon.

ful was this attempt (as strong pretences use to be upon ignorant and unsettled minds) that the *Galatians* began to waver, and yield themselves to the importunity of those that opposed the Apostles Doctrine.

Upon this account he stirs them up *to stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and that they should not suffer themselves to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage, v. 1.* of this Chapter. And because they might judge that Circumcision was less troublesome, and more needful than the other Rites of *Moses* his Law, he assures them that they that submitted themselves to that institution of the Law, left all the advantages of the Gospel, *Behold, I Paul say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing, v. 2.* And this he proves in the next words. *For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole Law:* that is to say, to all the rest of its ritual Precepts, and to the penal Sanction it self in all its rigour and severity; and therefore no gainer by the Gospel. And having shewed in the following verses, what is the summ of Christianity, namely, *faith working by love;*

love; having perswaded them to persist in the Faith, which he himself had taught them, having sharply censured the false Apostles, who laboured to pervert that Faith, he adds what you read in *vers. 13. For Brethren ye have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh.* In which words we may observe these two things.

1. An assertion of the liberty wherein the Gospel of Christ hath placed us: *Ye have been called unto liberty.*

2. A caution against the abuse of this liberty: *Only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh.*

1. The former of these, the liberty wherein the Gospel hath placed us, might be represented in more particulars than the time will allow me to consider; and therefore I shall confine my self to those two special instances of it, which are much considered in this Epistle.

1. Liberty from the numerous precepts, wherewith the Law perplexed the Jews in things indifferent in themselves.

2. And then the relaxation of the rigour of the penal Sanction of the Law.

1. The former instance of Christian Liberty

Liberty is far greater, than is usually taken notice of, as will appear, if we consider that there was scarce any one instance of Life, and Action, Religious, Moral, Civil, or Natural, wherein the Law given by *Moses* did not scrupulously charge and oblige the Conscience.

The Jewish Writers reckon fix hundred and thirteen Precepts in *Moses* his Law, most of which were meer restrictions of that liberty, which natural Religion, nay which Christianity it self allows. It would tire your patience to hear a Catalogue of all these positive institutions, and therefore I shall only remark a few particulars in several kinds,

I. And first of all their solemn and publick worship of God chiefly consisted in gifts, and sacrifices, which they might not offer in any place, which they should judge the most convenient, but at the place which God should chuse, which afterwards proved to be *Jerusalem*. Every adult, or grown man, was here to appear thrice in the year, and none to appear empty handed, none to make his address to God without a sacrifice for acceptance; a burnt-offering, and
a peace-

a peace-offering, besides a sacrifice for expiation in the cases wherein the Law required it; which cases were exceeding numerous. These sacrifices were to be free from blemish, and these blemishes were very many, and so were the several rules prescribed in offering, killing, and consuming every sacrifice made to God, all which things rendred Gods service under the Law, a far more nice and scrupulous thing than Christianity now makes it.

2. Next to the several rites of worship enjoyned the Jews by *Moses* his Law, I might instance in the scrupulous precepts, which much perplexed their moral actions: for there were few moral duties, which were not nicely circumscribed, and punctually determined in point of circumstance: The several dues of the Priests, and Levites, their very Charities to the poor were so determined in point of time, so circumstantiated in point of place, so scrupulously limited and prescribed, as made it hard to avoid offence in the greatest heed and observation; as will appear from several instances which I shall hereafter mention to you.

3. Nor were they thus perplexed
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and disciplined with abundance of nice and scrupulous Laws in the worship of God, and morality only, but in all their other affairs also.

1. They could not so much as build a house, but after a certain form and manner, with Battlements added to the roof, *Dent.* 22. 8. They might not dwell in the house they had built (at least as they interpret *Moses*) without certain Schedules of the Law affixed to the gates and parts of their doors, *Dent.* 6.9. Their houses were subject to disease, that is to say, to the Plague of Leprosie, as well as themselves to be pulled down, where they were not cured, and in case of cure to be purged, and cleansed by divers rites and expiations, *Levit.* 14.

2. They were not without restraint of Law in the cloaths wherewith they covered themselves. They might not put on any garment of linnen and woollen wove together: they were to edge their cloaths with fringes: they were (as themselves expound the Law) to wear certain Schedules of the Law upon their foreheads, and their arms, which are stiled *Phylacteries* in the Gospel, *Matt.* 23.

3. Their meat, and the preparation
of

of it were bounded with far more numerous Laws than any thing which I have yet mentioned. It would be infinite to give an account of the several kinds of living creatures, the flesh whereof were by the Law judged unclean; and the blood and tallow of the clean, yea the flesh it self in several cases, might not be eaten upon pain of death.

4. Nor was the preparation of their food any freer from the scruple of Law, than their food it self. They might not join divers kind of Creatures, as an Ox and an Afs, in the same yoke: They might not set their Orchards or Vineyards with divers kind of plants together, nor eat of the fruit of the three first years, nor of the fourth but at *Jerusalem*,

They were forbidden to sow their fields with several kinds, or sorts of seed; nor might they either plow, or sow, either in the seventh, or fiftieth year. They could not reap where they had sowed, nor gather the fruits where they had planted without the observation of such rules, as were troublesome at least in point of circumstance. A corner of the field, Olive-yard, and

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Vineyard

Vineyard was not to be reaped, or gathered at all, but left behind them for the poor; they might not glean where they did reap, or gather the fruits, either in their fields, or their plantations. They might not stoop to take up any little quantity of what might chanceably fall in gathering. If they had forgotten a sheaf of Corn, they might not return again to fetch it, Such were the scruples which encumbered them in their very Charities to the poor.

After they had gathered in their fruits, they might not apply them to their use, before they had separated divers portions for other uses. First a portion to be carried up to the Temple, and there presented before the Altar; Then another portion for the Priests, to be given to them in the Country, neither of which was to be less than a sixtieth part of all their fruits by the Decree of their wise men; Then a first Tythe to be given to the Levite; then another Tythe two years together to be carried to *Jerusalem* (in kind, or value) and there spent; and the third year given to the poor of the Land.

After all this, whensoever they kneaded

ed a mass of dough: a part must be separated for the Priest: Whensoever they killed of the herd, or flock, the Priest was to have his share in that. It would be endless to reckon up all particulars in this kind. The general account is thus stated by the Jews, the Poor had nine several gifts allotted them by a standing Law, three in the Field, four in the Vineyard, two in Plantations of other kinds, besides the second Tythe every third year: the Levites had the Tythe of all the fruits that were considerable; the Priests had four and twenty other dues, all but one at the peoples charge; and of the dues that were so charged, one was the flesh of the expiatory Sacrifices, and these Sacrifices were required for above fifty kinds of sins.

But that, which I now insist upon, is not the greatness of the expence, which the Law charged upon the Jews, but that all their Offices of Love and Charity were so circumstantiated by the Law, that they, who had the best inclinations to these duties in the general, must of necessity be much encumbered by the circumstances which the Law required in the exact performance of them.

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5. Add

5. Add hereunto the numerous Rites prescribed to the Jews in the very culture of their bodies, and that in the very minutest things. They could not so much as cut their hair, or shave their beards but under the restraint and scruple of Law, *Levit.* 19. 27. They were not begotten, they were not born without a ritual stain upon their parents; every woman that had brought forth a child was to take a journey to *Jerusalem* to sacrifice for her purification; and the child it self was to be redeemed with a certain price, if it were a son, and her first-born.

And now that I have mentioned Purification, what shall I say of the numerous cases wherein the Jews were made unclean by the sentence and judgment of the Law? What shall I say of the several Washings, the several Sacrifices, sometimes required to purge and make them clean again? What shall I say of their confinement, and separation from the Congregation, during the time they were unclean? The Jews observe that there were eleven general Fountains (so they stile them) of pollution, and these generals were almost infinite in their particular parts and branches. If

a man had touched an unclean creature, or any of the clean, which died of themselves; if he had touched a dead mans body, or any thing else which that had touched; if he had an issue of blood in himself, or had touched another that had such an issue, or any thing else, which he had touched. In these and innumerable other cases he was by the Law pronounced unclean, and being unclean, upon pain of death to purge himself, sometimes by Sacrifice, sometimes by the water of separation, always by bathing himself in water.

Time would fail me, if I should insist upon all the minute and scrupulous Rites which the Law of *Moses* enjoined the Jews: and indeed I have said enough already in order to my present purpose. For, as it appears from what I have said, they could not legally worship God without abundance of nice observances, wholly indifferent in themselves, but hard and troublesom in performance. They could not discharge their moral offices towards men without most scrupulous observations in point of circumstance of time and place, and other minute considerations. They could not manage the least affairs, they could not

do the commonest things without the scruple of Law and Conscience: For they could not build or inhabit their houses, they could not so much as cloath themselves, they could not plow, nor sow, nor plant, they could not reap, or gather in their fruits; they could not eat, or prepare their meat; they could scarce discharge any one action, religious, moral, civil, or natural, but under the check of a positive Law.

And that which is further to be observed is, that the most exact performance of the letter of all these positive Laws might leave them vicious and immoral, full of hypocrisie, pride, and malice, slaves to the world and their own lusts, and that where it left them in this condition, it did neither improve them in themselves, nor recommend them to Gods acceptance, much less procure eternal life. Which plainly appears from the Scribes and Pharisees, who although the most exact observers of all these ritual institutions, were most impure, and foul within, and least acceptable unto God.

Yet after all it was not needless, and therefore no unreasonable thing, that a people, amongst whom God himself in
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the first Ages of their Polity held the place of a Civil Magistrate, a people prone unto Idolatry, and living among idolatrous Nations, should be thus bound up by positive Laws in every instance of life and action; that so whatsoever they saw or did, the commonest actions in the world might put them in mind of the true God, and of his absolute Sovereignty over them. Especially seeing that their bondage under this toilsom Dispensation might better dispose them to embrace the easier state of Christianity, when God should please to call them to it. S. Peter tells them, that *Moses* his Law (meaning its positive institutions) was such a *yoke as neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, Act. 15. 10. Christ tells us, that *his yoke is easie, and his burden light*, Mat. 11. 30. They were in bondage under *the elements of the world*, Gal. 4. 3. And as S. Paul himself styles them, under *weak and beggarly elements*, v. 9. We are under a *royal law*, Jam. 2. 8. We are under the *law of liberty*, Jam. 1. 25. a Law recommended by better promises, a Law attended with greater helps, larger effusions of Gods Spirit, a Law that requires little else, but what is immuta-

bly good in itself, a Law, that where it proceeds further, rests in few and easie instances, in *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*: these are the Sacraments of the Gospel; these are but two, and both of them easie in practice, easie in sense and signification, and also greatly useful to us both to oblige us to our duties, and to increase our strength and comforts. Such is the liberty wherein the Gospel hath placed the professors of Christianity, a liberty from those numerous rights, those scrupulous precepts and injunctions, which fettered and perplexed the Jews in every instance of life, and action

2. Yet secondly there is a further liberty, wherein the Gospel hath placed us Christians, arising from the relaxation of the rigour of the penal Sanction, which was added to the Law of *Moses*.

The Law, indeed, did not threaten death to every sin, but in some cases allowed a sacrifice for expiation; but wheresoever it threatned death in express words, it did not allow repentance it self as a condition of remission.

Add hereunto that the same Law did threaten death to abundance of several kinds

kinds of sins (which the time will not suffer me to enumerate) whensoever committed against knowledge. So that whosoever had so sinned in any of those numerous kinds, had no dispensation from the Law, no not upon repentance it self, but was by the sentence of the Law, to die by God or the Magistrates hand.

'Tis true indeed the Law-maker did sometimes, that is, in some extraordinary cases, dispense with the rigour of his own Law. An example whereof we have in *David*, who although he was the supreme Magistrate (and therefore not to account to men for his transgression of the Law) was lyable to the hand of God, a punishment threatened in the Law) for his sins in the *matter of Uriah*, yet was not cut off by Gods hand, but pardoned upon his deep repentance. But this pardon was not the Act of the Law it self, but the dispensation of the Law-giver. And so indeed were these promises, wherein the Prophets proclaimed pardon, where the Law expressly death, as when they promised remission and pardon to Idolaters themselves, if they would repent.

For such was the rigour of the Law,
that

that whensoever it threatned death, it did not dispense with the guilty person, no not upon repentance it self, not upon amendment, and reformation. This is the meaning of the Apostle, when he saith, that *the Law worketh wrath*, Rom. 4. 15. when he stiles it *the ministration of condemnation*, 2. Cor. 3. 9. This is the reason, why having opposed it to the Gospel, as the letter unto the Spirit, he further adds, *that the letter killeth, but that the spirit giveth life*, vers. 6. of the same Chapter: this is the reason, why Christ is said to have come in the flesh to *deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage*, Heb. 2. 15. For as the Law threatned death to very numerous kinds of sin: so it admitted no expiation, no sacrifice, no repentance unto life, where it expressely threatned death, and here was the rigour of the Law.

Now the Gospel, on the other hand, although it threaten Eternal Death to obstinate, and impenitent sinners; yet it allows, and accepts repentance as a condition of remission in all degrees and kinds of sin, wherein the Law did not allow it as to the punishment it threatned.

ned. And this is the thing which S. Paul suggests, *Act. 13. 38.* *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (that is, through Christ) is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all those things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* There were numerous sins from which the Law did not absolve the offending person. The Law did never absolve, or justify, where a man had wittingly committed a sin, to which that Law threatned excision, but left him without any promise of pardon to the Sovereignty of the Law-maker. Whereas the Gospel in express words admits repentance and reformation as a condition of forgiveness in all those kinds and degrees of sin: no sin so hainous in its nature, none so aggravated by repetition, none so heightened by long continuance, whereunto the Gospel doth not expressly promise pardon upon the sinners return to God. Here is that grace that pardons the sensual and impure upon their amendment and reformation: here is that grace that pardons the violent and injurious upon repentance and restitution. Here is that mercy that forgives the impious and profane,

profane, if peradventure they shall reform and return to God by true repentance. A grace so great and undeserved, that it is seldom mentioned in Scripture without expressions of admiration. A grace so signal and so eminent, that when the Apostle had described it in the *fifth* Chapter to the *Romans*, he found it needful to spend the *sixth* in caution against the abuse of it. Not that the liberty of the Gospel, either in this or the former instance, is really such in its own nature, as that it gives any reasonable grounds for men to indulge themselves in sin, but that they, being bribed by their own lusts, take encouragement to do this, where none is given, *that is* (to use the Apostles words) *use the liberty, given in the Gospel, for an occasion to the flesh.*

2. And so I pass to the second part, the caution which the Apostle gives against the abuse of that liberty, which is allowed us in the Gospel.

Now as this consists in two instances, liberty from the numerous Rites, and from the rigour of the penal Sanction of *Moses* his Law; so was there something of abuse of both these parts of
Christian

Christian liberty in the primitive Ages of Christianity.

1. For first (as to the former instances) some there were, who being acquainted with their liberty from the Rites and Injunctions of the Law earlier than many others were, used the liberty of their consciences to ensnare the consciences of other men; scorned and censured them as weak and ignorant, and by their censures and examples engaged them in the neglect of some Laws relating to certain days and meats, before they understood their liberty, or had due time to understand it. And this abuse of Christian liberty is censured in *S. Paul's* writings both to the *Romans* and *Corinthians*.

2. Others, observing that *S. Paul* denied the necessity, nay in some cases forbade the use of the works of the Law (that is, of the Rites before mentioned) in order unto Justification, took liberty, as *S. James* suggests (*Jam. 3.*) to absolve themselves from the works and graces of the Gospel, from justice, mercy, and humility, from love, and patience, and veracity, from the engagements and obligations not only of the Laws of Christ, but even of natural Religion.

ligion it self. An error, which to this very day so infects the Divinity of many persons, that it is no wonder to see their Followers ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

2. But to pass on to the second instance. The relaxation of that rigour, which was in the penal Sanction of the Law, seems to have been no less abused than liberty from its numerous Rites. For it should seem, that some persons observing that the Gospel promised pardon, where the Law of *Moses* had denied it, and judging that the grace of God was highly magnified by that pardon, took leave to indulge themselves in sin, under pretence of magnifying Gods grace. Which is the error St. *Paul* censures, *Rom. 6. 12. What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. God offers no pardon but to the penitent; the design of his grace in offering pardon to the penitent, is to invite men to repentance; and therefore to use that grace as an encouragement to impenitence, is to use it just against it self, contrary to its own design, as well as against a mans own advantage.*

How much of this unthankful folly may

may yet remain in the Christian world, I am not able to determine; but sure I am, that there is something like unto it in very general use amongst us, which is the delay of reformation grounded upon the promise of pardon to every man that forsakes his sins, although he have long continued in them, a great abuse of the grace of God. God promises pardon to prevent despair, these abuse that promise to presumption: God admits repentance after sin to encourage us to forsake our sins, these abuse his grace in that instance to encourage them to continue in them, which is to condemn the goodness of God, and despise the mercy they should adore. And so S. Paul himself suggests, *Rom. 4. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

Add hereunto the great imprudence of the delay of reformation, whatsoever may be the occasion of it. For that a man, who is born to dye, and after death must come to Judgment, should put off repentance till the morrow, when for ought he knows he may dye to day, and eternally perish for want of it,

it, is such an imprudence and neglect, as that it would never have been believed that any man could have been guilty of it, had it not been evident in experience.

The genuine use of that liberty, whereunto God hath called us by the Gospel is, to use the freedom that God hath given us from the many and scrupulous Laws of *Moses*, as a motive to a freer compliance with the excellent Precepts of the Gospel; always remembering that these Precepts design our freedom, not our bondage. Is it bondage to live in the faith and hope of a world to come? Is it bondage to be just and temperate? Is it bondage to be kind and innocent? And to be short, is it any bondage to love God with all our hearts, and to love our Neighbour as our selves? that is to say, to do to others, as we would that they should do to us. No, this is bondage, to serve our lusts, and to lose the government of our selves, and the command of our own actions by their unreasonable importunities. There is no such thralldom in the world as to be denied the very liberty of pursuing that, which our own reason, our own conscience approves

approves as good, and avoiding that which it disallows. And this is the liberty our lusts deny us; namely, liberty to use our selves for our own advantage in things of the greatest weight and moment in the concerns of the world to come.

I have but one thing more to add, which is, That seeing God, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ, is pleased to admit us to repentance, and upon repentance to pardon of sin, and eternal life, we make acknowledgment of this his grace by the diligent practice of that duty, which hath the assured promise of it; neither refusing, nor delaying, where duty to our Sovereign Lord, and gratitude for his grace and mercy, and prudence and charity to our selves, oblige us both to speed and diligence.

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The Ninth Sermon.

Luke 12. 1.

-----Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisie.

IT is not unusual to find such things as are very different each from other sometimes compared to the same thing, either because this same thing may have several qualities answering to those in different things, or else because the things that otherwise greatly differ each from other, may yet possibly have some one thing (equally) common amongst themselves. Upon this account we find the very Kingdom of God, that is, the Gospel of our Lord (which is the Doctrine of that Kingdom) compared to *Leaven* in the Scriptures. So we find it *Luk. 13. 20, 21. Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? it is like leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.* Where the Gospel is compared to *Leaven,*

ven, because as a little lump of this spreads it self through the whole mass wherewith it is mingled : so did the Gospel of our Lord (as it is here foretold it should) propagate and diffuse it self from small beginnings amongst the Jews far and wide through other Nations.

On the other hand we also find, that the doctrine and hypocrisie of the Pharisees are by our Lord compared to *Leaven*; and that not only as apt to spread and diffuse themselves as *that* doth, but also as swelling the minds of men with pride and bitterness, as that sours and swells the lump it is mixt withal : insomuch that the prohibition of Leaven in the Paschal Feast was made a Symbol in the Law of the mortification of those vices ; and this the Apostle alludes unto, 1 Cor. 5. 8. *Let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The doctrine of the Pharisees is stiled Leaven, Mat. 12. 16. And their Hypocrisie is so stiled in the words I have now read unto you : *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisie.*

Now hypocrisie is an affectation of seeming to be what a man is not in point of piety towards God, or love and charity towards men. It is the counterfeit of Religion, an outward shew and appearance of it without the truth of the thing it self.

And because our Lord bids us beware of the leaven or Hypocrisie of the Pharisees, it will be requisite,

1. To consider the several instances wherein they exercised their hypocrisie.

2. To give an account of the Precept which commands us to beware of it.

1. Now the instances of Pharisaical hypocrisie seem especially to have been these :

1. They pretended to a greater holiness and devotion, an exacter knowledge of the Law, and an exacter obedience to it, than any other sort of people, yet were no better than others were; they made a greater shew of piety, they had a fairer form of godliness, but had no more of the power of it.

Josephus tells us (*Antiq. lib. 10. cap. 3.*) that they pretended to such exactness in their lives, to such a perfection in obedience,

dience, as that they judged God himself rejoyced in them, that he did not only accept of them upon the greatness of their piety, but that he pleased himself in them, and that they were infinitely dear to him.

S. Paul himself gives such a character of this Sect, as plainly shews they judged themselves far better persons than any other, and were so esteemed by others also. He stiles this Sect the *strictest sect of their Religion*, Act. 26. 5. and tells us further, that this was esteemed to teach and act *according to the perfect manner of the law*, Act. 22. 3. Our Lord himself brings in the Pharisees openly boasting a greater piety, a stricter life, a higher righteousness than any other kind of men. This he doth Luk. 18. 10, 11, 12. *Two men, saith he, went up to the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Where you find him making a great distinction between himself and other persons in the very first words he speaks to God. *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.*

Yet after all, if we observe our Saviours character of these men, we shall find them so far from being better, that they were worse than other persons, that though they profest they were no extortioners, yet they *devoured widows houses*, Mat. 23. 14. that they were within full of extortion and excess, v. 25. and to be short, that they *shut up the kingdom of heaven from men*, that they neither entred in themselves, neither suffered them that were entring, to go in, v. 13. of the same Chapter. And this was the first of those instances, wherein they exercised their hypocrisie.

2. The second was, that they confined all their Religion to outward actions, but all this while neglected the purifying of their hearts.

S. Paul reporting what he was while he continued to be a Pharisee, expressly tells us, that he was *blameless* as to the *righteousness in the law*. Touching the *righteousness which is in the law* blameless, Phil. 3. 6. His meaning is, that he avoided the outward actions expressly forbidden in the Law, that he observed and performed them, which were expressly then commanded, according to the interpretation which the Pharisees

fees put upon the Law ; more than this he could not mean ; he could not possibly believe himself to have been punctually clear and spotless in the inward affections of his soul, but only in point of outward action. But being so, he declares himself to have been blameless touching the righteousness in the Law, while he continued to be a Pharisee : which plainly shews, they thought the Law required no more than a conformity to its Precepts in outward action and behaviour. And thus doth *Kimchi* expound those words, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me* : that is, saith he, if I only think or design iniquity, but do not accomplish the design, if I only think or wish the evil, but do not act it in overt action, God will not impute it as sin to me : a gloss just contrary to the Text, not an explication of the words, but an express contradiction to them. 'Tis true indeed the Law did say, *Thou shalt not covet*, but did not expressly threaten punishment to them that coveted, if they did not act the ill imagined. Whereupon these Pharisees judged it a counsel rather than a precept, in gratification to their lusts, and judged

themselves exactly righteous, when they performed the overt actions the Law required, and avoided them forbidden in it. Such is the nature of hypocrisie, and such was that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

3. As they placed their righteousness wholly and solely in outward actions, and the omissions of such actions; so they performed those actions with abundance of outward pomp and shew, that they might be seen and praised of men. They gave alms, but sounded a trumpet both in the Synagogues and in the streets at the giving of it, *Mat. 6. 2.* They prayed much, but they loved to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, and this that they might be seen of men, *Mat. 6. 5.* They fasted also twice a-week (*Luk. 18. 12.*) but they put on a soure countenance, disfigured their faces, that they might appear unto men to fast, *Mat. 6. 16.* And this, as our Lord expressly tells us, *Mat. 23. 5.* they did all their *works to be seen of men.* Which is the nature of hypocrisie, and a certain signification of it.

4. They were far more nice, far more scrupulous in lesser things, than they were

were in things of greater moment; far more punctual in the observance of their own precepts and institutions, than those that were of Gods appointment, and far more diligent in the observance of Gods appointments in ritual matters and constitutions, than in the very Laws of nature, and things of indispensable goodness. These are the things our Saviour often objects to them, and more especially, *Matt. 23. the 23^d* and following verses, *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, those ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides which strain at a Gnat, and swallow a camel, which make such scruple in lesser things, and none at all in things of moment. And yet again in the following words, Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess: to wash the cup before they drunk, to cleanse the platter before they ate, was an institution of their own, and this they very duly observed; to purge the heart from all*
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extortion and impurity was a Law enjoined by God himself, but of this they made no account at all.

5. As they much abounded in institutions of their own, so some of these were so extravagant, that they were contrary to the very Laws of God, and nature. What Law more sacred and indispensable, what more natural, and more agreeable to humanity, than that which requires us to honour our Parents, to relieve and assist them in their wants, which is both a part, and a signification of that honour? yet such was the blindness of the Pharisees, that they licensed a man to make a vow to deny relief unto his Father, and pronounc'd the vow to be obliging; so our Lord, *Mark, 7. 10, 11. Moses said, honour thy Father and Mother, and who so curseth Father or Mother let him dye the death: but ye say, if a man shall say to his Father or Mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift by whatsoever thou mayest be profited by me, he shall be free, and ye suffer him no more to do ought for his Father or his Mother, making the word of God of none effect through your traditions: inventing a vow flatly contrary to Gods Law, and making the former*

mer oblige and bind to the destruction of the latter. Thus did they use a pretence of Piety towards God to absolve and quit them from their very duty to their Parents, used Religion against Religion, and made the very pretence of it a ground to neglect and contradict it.

6. They prescribed to others what they themselves would not practise, their precepts were stricter than their lives, to others they were extreamly severe, but kind and gentle to themselves; whence that reflection of our Lord, *Matt. 23. 3. 4. Do not after their works, for they say and do not, for they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born, and lay them on mens shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers:* an evident instance of Hypocrisie, of prevarication and deceit, for if the duty though hard and difficult, was yet necessary unto others, why was it not so to them likewise? and if it was not so to them, as it should seem they judg'd it was not, why was it then so to others? why did they then impose it on them? why reprove the neglect of it? why upbraid the mote or atome which they espied in their neighbours eye, while they

they suffered a beam to blind their own.

But to proceed to the last instance of the hypocrisie of the Pharisees, this lay in the flaming zeal they had to make Profelytes to their Party, to make Disciples to their Sect, while they made them worse, and not the better, nay greatly worse by so doing. And this is the thing objected to them by our Lord, *Matth. 23. 15. Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the Child of Hell than your selves.* And so in truth it came to pass; for the Profelytes made by these Pharisees became much worse than they themselves, the Scholars much outdid their Masters in their iniquities and wicked lives, the imitation outdid the original, being encouraged by the example; and this was observed by *Justin Martyr*, οἱ δὲ περισήλυντοι ἢ μόνον ἢ πιστεύουσι ἀλλὰ διπλότερον ὑμῶν βλασφημεῖσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. *The Presbyters, saith he, that are made by you do not only not believe, but do blaspheme the name of Christ twice as much as you your selves.* So efficacious are your examples and your Doctrines to
make

make the Disciple exceed the Master, to make the Gentile exceed the Jew in his Impiety and unbelief.

2. Having thus shewed the special instances of the Hypocrisie of the Pharisees, which was the former of the two generals before propounded, proceed we now to give an account of the latter also (that is) of the precept which bids beware of it. *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisie*, which words suggest these things:

1. The greatness of the evil which we are commanded to avoid.

2. The diligence that must be used if we will duly obey the precept.

1. I begin with the first, namely the greatness of the evil, which we are commanded to avoid.

1. And here first of all observe, that Hypocrisie falls exceedingly short of the very thing it pretends unto, namely, of being true Religion, for it is no more than the shadow of it: Hypocrisie pretends to the very height of all Piety, but is no more than a poor mean appearance of it.

(1.) It wholly consists in outward actions and omissions, performs the acts that

that seem most plausible unto men, avoids those that are most scandalous and expensive, but all this while neglects the purifying of the heart. It doth disguise, but not reform the lust within, it gilds and paints the outward man, but doth not produce a new life, or a better nature in the heart, it doth not mortifie any lust, it doth not quicken with any grace, it is no more a true Religion, than a picture is a living man, nor doth it reach the design and end of Christianity, which is to reform and change our nature, and form the Image of Christ in us, which is in righteousness and true holiness.

2. Charity, Sincerity, and Integrity, are the very life of Christianity, if we have not those, we have nothing of it, we cannot pretend unto perfection, we cannot say we have attain'd to the utmost degrees the highest measures of obedience; so that if we can lay no claim to Charity, if we cannot truly profess Sincerity and Integrity, although attended with imperfection, we have nothing to say for our being Christians, nothing of the truth of Christianity. Now so it is, Sincerity, Charity and Integrity are the very things the
Hypo-

Hypocrite wants, it is the nature of Hypocrisie to be void and destitute of these Graces; if it be not so, it is not Hypocrisie, it is not the vice we now mention, if it be so, it wants these virtues, and therefore the very life and spirit of true and real Christianity, and so falls short of the very end of true Religion: that's the first.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that it doth not only fall far short of true Religion, but that it is a great abuse, a mock, a scorn, a derision of it, and in very truth of God himself.

(1.) Hypocrisie is insolence against God, but fear and meekness towards men, it is an irreverence towards him, that searches and knows the hearts of men, and awe and reverence toward men, who can but observe our overt actions; that is contempt and slight of God, who clearly discerns the thoughts of the heart; and an honour and homage unto men, who have no further knowledge of them, than as they appear in overt actions, which is a great affront to God, and an equal abuse of true Religion.

(2.) But then farther there is another

ther great abuse that Hypocrisie offers to Religion, which lies in the use of the name, and title, and shew of it in order to base and unworthy ends, which is to pervert the very nature and order of things, and of Gods designs and institutions, to turn the end into a mean, and a mean into the principal end. Religion according to Gods appointment is to be prefer'd before any secular ends and profits, to be the chief in all our aims; and so be propagated and promoted by all the talents that God hath given us. But what is the nature, what is the custom of Hypocrisie? it is to debase and depress Religion to the service of secular gain and honour, it is to use the appearance of it, in prejudice to the thing itself, and to make a shew and fair appearance of Piety, Virtue, and Integrity, to supplant these very things themselves: this is the nature of Hypocrisie.

If he would effectually cheat his neighbour, if he would put a deceit upon him, he pretends to Piety and Religion, he censures the lives and manners of others, he complains, he harangues against the iniquity of the times, that he may better impose upon

upon him, gain his credit and then deceive him. If he would prefer and advance himself, intrude into places of power and profit, and thrust out those possessed of them, he presently inveighs against those persons, he pretends Religion in so doing, pretends reformation of abuses, makes the very highest profession of Truth, and Justice, and Integrity.

If he would gratifie animosity and revenge himself upon his neighbour, here he pretends Religion again, here his Conscience is engaged, he is concerned for the publick good, a thing he will never forsake or quit whatever it cost him to pursue it.

If he would disturb the publick peace, create Sedition and Confusion, if he would overthrow the Government, and change its Laws and Constitutions, if he would destroy Religion itself, Religion must be pretended for it. This he prostitutes to every base and unworthy end, this he prostitutes to every lust; he makes it serve his Pride, and Ambition, he makes it serve his Spite, and Malice, he makes it minister to filthy Avarice, just as the Pharisees

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under a pretence of long Prayers devoured and ate up Widows houses, *Mark 12. 40.*

3. And then thirdly, lest you should think it a thing impossible, that any man should pretend Religion, nay great and extraordinary measures of it, and yet retain these foul lusts of Pride, and Scorn, and love of the World, of Envy, Malice; and Animosity; you are to know that these lusts are not only not inconsistent with such pretences, but allow the very sins themselves which the Pharisees were chiefly guilty of, and objected to them by our Lord. Their pride and haughtiness is reproved, *Matt. 23. 5, 6, 7. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the Synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi:* here is their haughtiness and ambition, their presumption and self conceit reproved. And then there censure and scorn of others is also detected and chastised, *Matt. 7. 3, 4, 5. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy Brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? or how wilt thou say to thy Brother, let*

*let me pull out the mote out of thine eye,
and behold a beam is in thine own eye?
thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of
thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly
to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye.*

And although the Pharisee in his prayer thanked God that he was not as other men, particularly that he was no Extortioner, *Luc. 18. 11.* yet one that knew them much better than they themselves knew them, our Lord himself, gives us another account of them, he tells us that they were full of Extortion, greatly infected with it *within, Matt. 23. 25.* And as for malicious craft and subtilty, these are not obscurely charged upon them by him that could not be mistaken, *Matt. 23. 33. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell? ye, says he, build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets; and yet they were of the same spirit their Fathers were, insomuch that they who here profess, that they would never have shed the blood of the Holy Prophets, shed that of the very Son of God, and of his*

followers and Disciples, and this our Saviour well foresaw, and therefore adds (*v. 32.*) *fill ye up the measure of your Fathers*: from whence I conclude that as hypocrisie is a mock-religion, and so an abuse of true Piety; so likewise that it leaves the hypocrite under the power of Pride, Covetousness, and Animosity, under the dominion of those lusts, that are most flat contradictions to it.

4. Having said so much of the nature and quality of this vice in the three particulars last mentioned, you will not wonder at what I shall add in the *last place*, which is that hypocrisie mightily tends to the utter destruction of true Religion; not in the hypocrite (for in him it hath no place at all) but in the very world it self, that is to say, in all other persons, and this it doth two several ways.

1. By debauching the nature of it.
2. By bringing a Scandal upon it.

(1.) For first its the nature of hypocrisie to debauch the nature of true Religion by turning it into meer formality, into nice and scrupulous Superstitions, in the avoiding, or in the practising of things indifferent in themselves,

selves, and endless disputes about these things, which do not only imploy mens minds in things that are not of any moment, and take them off from the study and practice of true Religion, but wholly destroy Christian Charity, fill men with mutual Animosities, and by their means eat out the very heart of Piety.

It is the temper of hypocrisie to accomodate itself to the opinion and judgement of men. The generality of mankind look no farther than to the shew and surface of things, and therefore hypocrisie concerns itself in nothing further, than to obtain the applause of men, either in the observing or the avoiding of things indifferent in themselves, things that may be done or omitted (unless commanded by superiours) in the meantime, while it is thought sufficient on one hand to recommend a man to God if he abound in rite and ceremony, in an infinite number of outward actions, such as are used in the Church of *Rome*; and on the other, while all Religion is placed in avoiding all that's decent in appearance, every thing that is called a Ceremony, and a man must certainly be a Saint, that shall defie and rail at this; true Religion is almost lost,

almost forgotten and laid aside in the noise of these disputes and quarrels.

2. But lastly ther's yet another way wherein hypocrisie dangerously tends to the destruction of true Religion, which is by the scandal which it brings upon the name of all Religion.

For although it be very true indeed, that men are generally very strangely charm'd by the shews and pretences of Religion, yet when it appears, as it doth at last where it is not real, that all these shews are void of truth, that they are but shews and nothing more, this makes the very name of Religion despicable, odious, and abhorr'd, it brings profaneness and infidelity, and makes the very profession of Piety, vile and contemptible in the world, a dangerous and a destructive issue, as we our selves have plainly found by our own experience in this Nation.

Hypocrisie being but a counterfeit coin, never long retains its Credit: and so indeed it happened at last amongst the Pharisees, for although they were in great reputation amongst the Jews in our Saviours time, yet I find that they lost it afterwards, and became so despicable in the Nation, that they
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were branded with scurrilous names, some they called *Sechemitical Pharisees*, such as were so for their own profit; others they styled the *stumbling Pharisees*, who for an appearance of humility, would scarce lift up their feet in the streets; others they called the *wounded Pharisees*, who shut their eyes as they went in the streets, lest they should perhaps behold a temptation, but by so doing often fell and hurt themselves; others they styled the *boasting Pharisees*, because they pretended not only to do whatsoever the Law of God required, but also a great deal more than so: other approbrious names and titles they put upon some other sorts, from whence it appears that they did at last lose all their credit amongst people; nor need we question, that even true Religion it self became contemptible on that account. The life is derided for the deformity of the picture, the truth is prejudiced by the counterfeit, the faults and basenesses of hypocrisie ascribed to true Religion it self, and this I take to be one reason of the infidelity and profaneness that reign at present in this Nation. God of his mercy remove the Scandals, and heal the distempers that are amongst us.



The Tenth Sermon.

Luk. 12. 1.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisie.

IN these words, as I have observed, there are these two things suggested to us:

1. The greatness of the Evil, which we are commanded to avoid; this I have already finished.

2. The diligence that must be used, if we will duly observe the precept intimated in the word *beware*; which shews it is no such easie thing to avoid all Pharisaism and hypocrisie, as we may perhaps imagine it is.

And for the clearing of this point, I shall desire you to observe, that an appearance of Religion, or a Religion in outward show, void of the true spirit of it, is apt to recommend it self, and strangely to impose on men; as such a Religion which is,

1. Easie,

1. Easie.
2. Pleasant. And,
3. Fit to promote and serve those ends, which the generality of Mankind are apt to propound unto themselves.

1. It is an easie thing to make an outward shew of piety, while the lust is suffered to dwell within, and men naturally love their ease, and are ready to content themselves with that which hath a fair resemblance of Religion, and that is favourable to the lusts, to love and embrace it on that account.

Men never quarrel with Religion, till it offer violence to their lusts; they use it as *Herod* did the Baptist, speak it fair, and treat it kindly, and bear fair regard to it, while it is content to oblige no further than to some plausible outward actions. It is never difficult till it require them to subdue and mortifie the lust within, and those peculiar lusts and passions, which are predominant in themselves; till it demand an eye, or a hand, something that's dear or useful to them. Here it is that they forsake it, and cast it off, when it grows pressing and importunate in contradiction to their appetites.

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In the mean time, if it will indulge the lust within, if it will permit pride, and avarice, and animosity to dwell there, and content it self to paint and gild the outward man, if it will be satisfied with these external shews and actions, which are plausible in the eyes of men, and thwart no secular end and interests, no carnal appetites and inclinations, they are ready enough to entertain it.

Now this is the nature of hypocrisie, it will be satisfied with those things. This, as I formerly shewed at large, was the Religion of the Pharisees. They did confine it to outward actions, and further yet, to those that made the fairest shew in the eyes of men, adding hereto a due care to omit the evils, which were so notoriously and grossly, so that they could not possibly be excused, either by misinterpreting the Law, or by blinding the eyes of men, that they should not be able to discover them. And this it was that made their Religion strangely spread and diffuse it self through the Body of the Jewish Nation.

¶ We are all apt to study for easie ways to Heaven. All mankind desire happiness,

ness, but they desire it may cost them nothing to attain it. This was the reason why the Gnosticks made it lawful to deny Christ, to abjure Christianity in times of trouble and persecution. This is the reason why the spiritual Guides of the Church of *Rome* are glad to accommodate the Rules of life, and the Conditions of salvation, not to the Precepts of our Lord, but to the ordinary ways and manners of mankind. This is the reason why they are glad to absolve from sin upon mere profession of repentance, to promise forgiveness and life eternal to them that will undergo the penance, although they will not forsake the sin.

An easie Religion easily recommends it self to mens acceptance and inclinations; such was the Religion of the Pharisees, such in truth is all hypocrisie, and therefore scarce to be avoided without considerable care and diligence.

2. And secondly, What is more considerable, hypocrisie is not only an easie, but a pleasant Religion to flesh and blood; as exercising it self in censuring the vices, scorning the Persons, and opposing the Religion of other men; all which things, as they pass for Religion

on with many men, so are they so far from being troublesome, that they are singular gratifications to pride, and envy, and animosity.

1. The Religion of the Pharisees, that is, hypocrisy, much consists in censuring the vices of other persons. They had an eye upon every mans life, except their own; they had a reproof for every mans faults, great or small, while they were indulgent to themselves. They were concerned in every other mans behaviour far more than in their own lives. Our Saviour tells us, as I observed in a former Discourse, that they *laid heavy burthens and grievous to be born on other mens shoulders, but that they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers*, Matth. 23. 4. He tells us how sharp and quick they were in espying a mote in their Brothers eye, not considering the beam in their own, Matth. 7. 3. Which as it passeth for Religion amongst the men that are apt to use it, so it is grateful to flesh and blood, and the natural passions of mankind. It gratifies pride and self-conceit, it gratifies anger and animosity, it feeds self-love with great content, as making the person verily think that he himself
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hath a detestation unto evil, because he censures it in other persons.

How eloquent and how free of speech are those men that take upon them to condemn the faults of other persons! how do the words gush like water from a Fountain! What heat, what warmth, what zeal and passion may you discover in their language? and whence doth all this Rhetorick flow? what is the Spring of all this Eloquence, but the pleasure they take in the reproof, in the rebuke of their Neighbours sins? So pleasant is it and delightful to censure the faults of other men.

2. Add hereunto another instance of the Religion of the Pharisees, very grateful to flesh and blood, and the sinful passions of humane nature, which lyes not only in censuring the faults, but deriding the persons of other men. I need not say how much the Disciples of our Lord, how much our very Lord himself was scorned and derided by the Pharisees. But that which I now observe is this, That it passes for a piece of Religion amongst some persons to speak contemptuously of other men. To scorn a Priest, to deride a Bishop, to mock and scorn a whole Profession,

is judged by some a very considerable part of Religion. To invent opprobrious names and fables, to forge, to receive and spread reports, false and scandalous and disgraceful concerning their persons and their lives, is now become a part of Religion with many men. They do not only not accuse themselves for this, but they applaud themselves in it; they do not only not believe themselves the worse, but better men for so doing; this is their Religion, this is their Piety, this is the thing for which they prize and value themselves; and if they should be denied this, they would have very little to say, little to plead for their being of any Religion at all. If you should strip them of their zeal in scorning those they ought to value, if you should quench all that heat that appears in anger and animosity against the persons of other men, if you should require what God doth, what is commanded in the Gospel, to shew their Religion in Faith and Hope and Christian Charity, in patience, gentleness and humility, in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, wherein the Kingdom of God consists, *Rom. 14. 17*; you would find them far from being that which they imagine them-

themselves to be, namely, true and real Christians.

In the mean time being it is so pleasant, being 'tis so grateful to flesh and blood, and to the animosity which they have against the persons of other men, to brand them with opprobrious names, to pour contempt and scorn upon them, and to believe that it is Religion so to do; I think we have reason to beware of such a dangerous vice as this, which turns a sin into Religion, and so in truth makes Religion a contradiction unto it self.

3. One thing more I must further add to what I have said of this Point, which is the delight that a man may take either in the opposing or deriding of the Religion of other persons, and the great opinion which he may have of himself for this, which yet can give him no assurance that he is not a hypocrite in so doing. I need not say, how sharp and eager strifes are raised about Religion in the World, I need not shew what fierce debates, what hot contentions there are about it, and have been in all former Ages. These are known and evident things, but that which is here to be considered, is that the zeal
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that many men have in these disputes is rather to destroy the Religion that is professed by other persons, than set up another instead thereof, it is to subvert and not to reform, it is to overthrow, and not amend. In the mean time being it is concern'd about Religion, and being it hath a mighty passion in this concern, it passes for Religion itself: so apt are men to mistake them, to embrace a shadow instead of truth, and to judge themselves to be Religious for a negative, not a positive thing, for being against the Religion of others, rather than for any of their own; wherein they gratifie their own passions, please their own corrupt affections, and so easily suffer themselves to be deceived and imposed upon.

3. But then thirdly, we must consider, that as hypocrisie is not only an easie Religion, but also pleasant to flesh and blood in many instances and effects; so that it also powerfully tends to serve those ends, which men are apt to propound and follow, that is to say,

(1.) The reputation of being judg'd to be truly pious.

(2.) And the obtaining of wealth and power, and all the advantages of this World.

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1. The appearance of Religion destitute of the power of it, doth for a time gain the reputation of true Religion, nay more reputation for the most part than true Religion itself obtains.

Our Saviour relating how the Pharisees gave Alms to gain the glory of men, presently adds, *verily I say unto you they have their reward*, Matt. 6. 2. relating how they prayed in the streets to the same end, adds the very same words again, *verily I say unto you they have their reward*, v. 5. relating how they disfigured their faces when they fasted, that they might appear to men to fast, adds the very same words again, *verily I say unto you they have their reward*, v. 16. of the same Chapter, that is to say, they gain that glory which they seek, they are esteemed as they desire, the best and strictest sort of men and so the Apostle St Paul suggests, when he calls this very sect of the Pharisees, *the strictest sect of their Religion*, Acts 26. 5. when he reports that they taught according to the perfect manner of the Law, Acts 22. 3. for here he designs not to let us know that the thing itself was so indeed, but that it was commonly judged to be so: so great was their

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credit among the people, that when six thousand of them refused to do what the rest of the Nation did, swear allegiance unto *Cæsar*, and were fined for refusing so to do: The wife of *Pherotas* (a rich man) out of the great opinion she had of their singular Piety and devotion, was ready to pay the Fine for them, she paid it, and was applauded for it, nay flattered with hope of the very Kingdom: they told her God himself had decreed that *she*, and *her husband*, and *their issue* should have the Government of the Nation, and that he himself had assured them of it in the communion they had with him, and this their Prophecie was believed upon account of the great reputation of their Piety, *Joseph antiqu. lib. 10. cap. 3.*

Nor must you think it a strange thing that hypocrisie should gain the reputation of true Religion, for I must say something stranger still, namely, that it often gains a greater credit and reputation, at least for a time, than true Religion itself obtains: the reasons whereof are plain and evident. For, The Hypocrite makes it his very business to appear in the visible shew of Piety,

Piety, takes care that every Religious action appear to the eyes, or come to the knowledge of the World; so did the Pharisees give their Alms, so did they order their prayers and fasts, that the World might observe and understand them: whereas the sincere and true Christian thinks it enough to approve himself to God in private, and takes no thought how to commend himself to men, further than by avoiding scandal, and by a true and unaffected discharge of duty to God and men, without the circumstance of pomp and shew, of much appearance in so doing.

The Hypocrite again pretends to the very height of Piety, to the greatest measures of perfection, the upright person pretends no more than he hath really attain'd unto.

The Hypocrite makes it his great business to be always speaking of Religion in every place, in every company at all times, upon all occasions, though they be never so unseasonable the upright person contents himself to give Religion its due place, to take convenient opportunities to mention, propagate, and promote it.

The Hypocrite makes it his design to shew a singular zeal and fervour for the smallest things that relate to Religion, nay things of no concernment in it; the upright person is more modest, lays no more of stress on things than the Laws of God or men require. By all which means it comes to pass that the reputation of the hypocrite sometimes far exceeds that of true, and wise, and sober Christians; which as it may press a strong temptation to bewitch and draw men to that sin; so should it move to the greater watchfulness, the greater diligence to avoid it.

2. But then secondly, as hypocrisy often gains the credit of true Religion, nay more than that itself can gain in the general blindness of mankind: so doth it most effectually serve for the advancement of other ends, which men are apt to entertain, namely, the gaining of wealth and power, and all the advantages of this World.

And here I shall not make any stay upon meaner persons, who yet generally find it useful for their advantages in the world, to make a shew of greater Piety, than they are really possessors of; But I shall observe to what degrees of power

er and honour the Pharisees did advance themselves by their pretences to greater exactness in Religion, than other factions amongst the Jews. *Josephus* tells us, that there were three sects of Religion amongst the Jews in his time, the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and the *Essenes*: of these the *Essenes*, as he tells us, lived the best, but the *Pharisees* were of greatest credit, insomuch that the very *Sadducees* themselves, if they arrived to any Authority in the Nation, were forced to accommodate and yield themselves to all the dictates of the *Pharisees*, *Antiqu. lib. 10. cap. 2.* He tells us that these were so esteem'd, that they govern'd all in matters of State; that they had such Interest in the people, that they were not afraid to resist and oppose the lawful Magistrates, to oppose their very Kings and Princes, and to raise Arms, and war against them. He tells us a very remarkable story relating to our present purpose: *Alexander Jannæus* during his Reign over the Jews had done many cruel and odious things, and some that highly displeas'd the *Pharisees*, and was therefore greatly hated by them as well as by the rest of the people. In this condition

he falls sick, his sickness at last prevailed so far, that there was no hope of recovery left. This being observed by his wife *Alexandra*, who knew very well how odious he was to all the people, and to the Pharisees amongst the rest, and the infinite troubles and vexations that threatned his family after his death, she is presently overflowed with sorrows, as in the prospect of what she fear'd might happen. Alas says she to her dying Husband, what a condition do you leave us in? to whom do you leave your wretched Widow? to whom do you leave your miserable Orphans? what shall we do when you are gone? Peace says the King, take my advice, and I will put you into a way, wherein you shall not only live, but reign in peace and great security: you know the mighty power and credit that the Pharisees have among the people, for their seeming Piety and Religion, you know the hatred I labour under, hath chiefly and principally been occasioned, because I have disoblighed them. When I am dead, speak them fair, give them the praises they desire, expole my body unto them, let them use it at their pleasure, either bury

bury it, if they please; or abuse, and insult, and trample upon it, and drag it through the mire of the Streets. Let them govern all your affairs, let them but govern and rule you, and you shall easily rule the people. Well, this she did, and doing this the Pharisees were quieted and appeased, and they did not only not abuse, but very honourably interr his Body; they made Orations in the commendation of his Person, they settled his Widow in the Kingdom by their Authority among the people; they governed her, and she the Kingdom. (*Antiq. lib. 13. c. 23, 24.*) Such power and interest among the people did they obtain by the reputation of their Religion. From whence I observe, How powerful a thing the appearance of Religion is to serve a mans secular ends and interests, even beyond real piety.

Now that which gives it this advantage for these ends, at least for a certain space of time, till it be discovered and detected, is because it gives a man the licence of using such methods for his end which no man truly conscientious can possibly allow himself to use. It gives him leave to say or do, whatsoever it be, that may serve his end. It gives

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him leave to promise fair to every person, although he never design performance ; to fill men with infinire expectations of publick good, or their own preferment and advantage , though nothing of these things be intended. It gives him leave to apply himself to every mans humour and desire, to flatter the proud, to praise the ambitious, to bribe the covetous, to serve and caress every mans lusts, and to accommodate such a Bate for every person, as is most pleasing to his Appetite. By all which means it often effectually serves its end before it can be well discovered, and then discovery doth not hurt it. It hath gained the advantages it designed, and, it may be, the reputation of wisdom, though it hath lost that of piety.

Now being hypocrisie is an easie and a pleasant Religion, grateful in several Parts and Instances to the sinful passions of Mankind, being apt to serve the several ends of gaining applause , and wealth, and power, it will require a singular care, a great watchfulness over our selves to avoid it in all degrees and measures, to be infected with nothing of it. It will require the more of this, because a man may be an Hypocrite, and yet

yet not be aware he is so ; he may be infected with this Disease, and that in a very high degree, and not be sensible of his Malady, not feel and observe it in himself. 'Tis clear that the very Pharisees themselves were not aware of their own hypocrisies. Had they been so, they could not *have trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and have despised others* ; which Christ expressly saith they did, *Luke 18. 9.* Had they been conscious of their hypocrisies, though they might have boasted this their righteousness before men, who did not understand their hearts, they could not have done it before God, who, as they knew, did understand them ; and yet our Saviour brings in the Pharisee boasting of his righteousness before God, *Luke 18. 11, 12.* But they were not conscious to themselves of their own hypocrisies. And this is the reason why our Lord so often upbraided them with their blindness. Interest is a subtle thing, it easily insinuates into mens counsels, easily slides into their designs, and moulds them into a Form of Godliness, begets an appearance of Religion, when they are little aware of it. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,*
who

who can know it ? Jerem. 17. 9.

This being so, if we will avoid so sly a vice, if we would exclude so subtle and so deceitful a sin, it will concern us,

(1.) First of all to avoid the several causes of it, Pride, and Avarice, and Ambition. For lay this down for a certain Rule, Hypocrisie is no solitary vice, it is never found alone in any man, it always serves some other lust, it always ministers to some superior vice within, that is to say, either to the love of the praise of men, or that of secular wealth and power. If a man design not to serve these lusts, if these do not bear any sway in him, he's in no danger of hypocrisie. For that's a vice that always ministers to some other, and these are the vices which it serves.

(2.) And then further it will secure us from hypocrisie, if we will fully content our selves with those advantages of Religion, which God hath certainly promised to it, peace with him, peace of Conscience in this World, and eternal happiness in the other. I know very well that true Religion doth often contribute to further ends, namely, both to welfare and reputation in this very world,

world, as well as the other. But because there are certain times and circumstances, wherein it will not serve those ends, wherein the best and wisest men shall be esteemed the very worst, superstitious, cold and formal men, by those that are zealous in some Faction, and know no Religion but that zeal; because such times as these may be, it is safest to content our selves in gaining those rewards and blessings, that are peculiar to Religion, the testimony of a good Conscience, and life eternal in the World to come.

(3.) And then lastly, Because hypocrisy is so deceitful and sly a sin, as always serving worldly interest, which is apt insensibly to blind the eyes, and infatuate the minds of the wisest men (and yet hide it self from them themselves) it will concern us to be very frequent and impartial in the examination of our selves, to weigh our counsels, to try our ends, to prove our designs in every action relating any way to Religion. It will be needful to consider whether we indeed design it, really intend to promote and practise it wherever we make a profession of it. And then because that God alone knows the heart, and because
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his Grace is most needful to discover ourselves unto our selves in the midst of the many sins and passions that may infatuate and beguile us ; let us earnestly pray for his Holy Spirit to deliver us from all the infatuations, and all the seductions of our lusts. Let us make the Address which David did, (*Psal.* 139. 22, 24) with whose words I shall conclude : *Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting.*

The



The Eleventh Sermon.

John 14. 1.

-----*Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

The whole verse is thus :

Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

THESE words are a preface to a very large and kind discourse made by our Lord unto his followers, wherein he delivers the main foundations of Christianity as well in matter of Faith, as Practice ; which is the reason why he begins it with such words, as might effectually stir them up to give both attention and belief to all that he should deliver in it : *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

In which words we have two parts :

1. A concession, or supposition, *Ye believe in God* ; that is, ye believe that there is a God, and what is consequent hereupon, that he is to be trusted and obeyed,

obeyed, although some others read the words not as a Declaration, *Ye believe in God*, but as a Command, *Believe in God*; but there is no reason to depart from our own Translation in this matter.

2. Here is a Precept also, *Believe in me*; that is to say, believe that I am the Son of God, sent by him into the world to reveal the Gospel of life eternal; and therefore judge your selves obliged to believe whatsoever I reveal, and obey whatsoever I command you.

Now being that belief in Christ, in the sence I have now explained unto you, is here required as an addition, or further accession to the mere belief in God only, as he may be known by the light of nature. The Subject which the Words before us offer to our consideration is, That the belief of Christian Doctrine, as it is revealed to us in the Gospel, over and above that knowledge of God which the light of Nature affords unto us, is necessary to our eternal happiness. In the prosecution of which Point,

1. I must first consider, That the firm belief of the Gospel of Christ is most expressly required by God, and the denial

nial of such belief forbidden under no less a penalty than the utter loss of life eternal.

Salvation is always promised to them who believe in him who hath revealed it, and become his Followers and Disciples; to other persons it is not promised. *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,* Joh. 3. 14, 15. Nor is it only promised to those, and those only, that so believe; but denied to them that believe not, to them that refuse to yield their belief to him whom God hath sent and sanctified to be the Saviour of the World. *He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* And so again (omitting several other places of the same sense and signification) in the first Epistle of St John, chap. 5. ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son.* Thrice did God bear this Record, and owne our Lord to be sent
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by him by an exprefs voice from Heaven, once at his Baptism in these words, *Matt. 3. 17. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.* A second time at his transfiguration upon the mount, with some addition to those words, *Matt. 15. 5. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* And yet again a third time, a little before our Saviours passion, when praying to God in these words, *Father glorifie thy name*, he was answered by a voice from Heaven, *saying, I have both glorified it and will glorifie it again,* *John 12. 28.* To all which clear and exprefs testimonies given by the Father to his Son, I might first add the glorious miracles wrought by Christ during his life, then his resurrection from the dead, and the effusion of his Spirit upon the Apostles sent by him, and all the miracles wrought by them, and all his other followers also; which being evident demonstrations that he was the very son of God, and sent by him to save the World, highly aggravate the great sin of infidelity and unbelief, and teach us to forbear to wonder that it should be punished with death eternal, and that Christ himself should thus pronounce

pronounce, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

2. But then secondly, lest you should think that God will have us believe the Gospel meerly because he will have it so, and that he had no further end in the truth therein revealed unto us, than that we should believe them only: I further add that the belief of those truths is greatly necessary to several ends of infinite moment and importance.

1. For the full and perfect knowledge of the duties which he requires from us.

2. For the like knowledge of the great motions to those duties.

3. For our better support under all our tryals, fears, and dangers.

1. The belief of the great-truths revealed unto us in the Gospel, is necessary for the perfect knowledge of the duties which God requires from us, and that upon several considerations: namely (1.) because that though the light of nature well improved, may in some measure direct us to very many of them; yet such improvement of that light is no very easie or common
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thing: and (2.) because there is now a higher measure of natural duties required from us, than was accepted in former times, that is, the times before the Gospel: and (3.) yet again, because there are now even other kinds and sorts of Duties required from us, than the light of Nature can discover.

(1.) Therefore let it be well considered, That although it be very true indeed, that the light of nature well improved may direct and guide us to many Duties, yet such improvement of that light is no such easie and common thing. The strong affections that are in men to the gains and pleasures of this life allow them but very little time to spend in the study of their Duties, much less do they prompt them to that Study. They press the gaining of what is easie, what is pleasing to flesh and blood; they press the pleasing of themselves in the fruition of what they love, and doing so, strangely infatuate the minds of men, and render it infinitely hard and difficult to excite those sparks of natural light which God hath planted in their minds. Insomuch that we find by sad experience, that the generality of mankind in all the Ages of the World have been
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much apter to extinguish than to improve the light of nature. If you consider the state of the world before the Flood, you find that impurity and iniquity had strangely spread and diffused themselves through the generality of mankind, *God saw, says Moses, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. Every imagination evil, and only evil, and that continually. If you descend below the Flood, how did the very same impieties, and these with a very great accession, namely with that of idolatry it self, presently deluge the World again? How universal were these impieties, and that idolatry? Insomuch that the very seed of *Abraham* had learned the manners, learned the idolatries used in *Egypt*, before the giving of the Law, and could not be so restrained from them, but that they were ever and anon relapsing after the very Law was given, during all the time of the first Temple. And though we find them cured indeed of their idolatry after the Babylonian captivity, yet did they still pollute themselves with strange immoralities and superstitions.

perstitutions. Infomuch that when our Saviour came to reform the world, he found it in such a deplorable state, that *S^t Paul* thought fit to represent it in those words, and many others to the same purpose out of the Psalms, *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doth good, no not one*, Rom. 3. 10, 11, 12. See here into what a wretched state the world was fallen, when our blessed Lord was sent into it; see, how little success or influence the light of nature had upon it, either to hinder, or to reform the greatest impieties and profaneness. And lest you should think the very professors of humane wisdom, the very Philosophers among the Greeks, to have been better than the people, I must say, that it was not generally so; but on the contrary, that the generality of these persons were as prophane, and as Idolatrous as the people, and more Atheistical than they were. And this is the thing *S^t Paul* declares; *Rom. 1. 22.* and the following verses, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and*
changed

hanged the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, the very vilest of the Creatures: for which cause God gave them up to vile affections, which he largely describes in the following parts of that Chapter. So far was the light of nature from restraining Ideots and mean Persons, that it did not restrain the very Philosophers from great impieties and superstitions, no nor from gross and foul Idolatry, which yet is the greatest contradiction, the greatliest opposite to that light.

And it is worthy our observation, that there is not now at this very day any heathen Nation in all the world, that doth not worship dumb Idols, save only those that follow *Mahomet*; and that the reason why this very sect are not Idolaters, is because that *Mahomet*, that great Prophet, took the belief of one true God from Christian Doctrine, and because his followers live in the neighbourhood of Christian Nations, and have Christians generally dwelling with them. From all which instances it appears, how hard it is so to secure, so to improve the light of nature, as that

it shall not grossly fail even in the discovery of natural duties, unless it be helped by Revelation; and therefore how necessary, how indispensably needful it is, to believe the Gospel for the assisting of that light in the knowledge even of natural duties.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that there are now greater degrees, higher perfection in natural duties required from us, since the Revelation of the Gospel, than were accepted, or required, before the Revelation of it.

Now therefore allowing that natural light, can in a measure teach and prompt us to practise those two general duties, which consist in the love of *God* and *Men*, and also in the distinct branches, the several instances of those duties, yet will it be very hard to say, that it can either teach, or move us to practise all these several offices in those degrees which God doth now require from us: for God requires such a degree of natural duties, that is, of love to himself and men, as is proportionable to the helps and motives, which he affords for the performance of these duties, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required, and to whom*
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men have committed much, of him they will ask the more, Luk. 12. 48. Now natural light doth not afford an equal measure of help, and motives to natural duties, with those that are given us by the Gospel, and therefore it cannot be imagined but that God requires a greater degree of these duties, namely, of love to himself and men, and of all the branches, all the instances of that love, than natural light can work in us, than is accepted, or required where the Gospel is not published and revealed. Will any man say, that the very Gospel affords no greater helps and motives, for the performance of those duties, which the light of nature may suggest, than this alone can offer to us? is the clear relation of life immortal, the express promise of that life, and of the assistance of Gods grace, and the unspeakable love of God in giving his Son to die for us, nothing more, nothing greater, nothing more powerful or efficacious to perswade the practice of natural duties, than the very light of nature only? or doth not God require a greater degree of obedience, where he hath given greater knowledge, and greater abilities to o-

bey him? who can deny either of these? and if these cannot be denied, certain it is, that there is now (since the Revelation of the Gospel) a greater degree of natural duties required from men, where that Gospel is revealed, than was accepted, or required before the Revelation of it.

3. To all this add in the third place, that there are now some certain duties enjoined unto us, which the light of nature can in no wise discover to us: such are the Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord; such is the worship of Jesus Christ as Mediator, and such no doubt, is the invocation of the Holy, and ever blessed Trinity: all which duties purely depend upon Revelation, and are not in any wise suggested by natural light, howsoever improved.

If it be said, that these duties are not required, where the Gospel is not revealed and published, this is no answer, no excuse for those persons, who live where the Gospel is revealed. They are required to practise these as well as any natural duties, and sure the wilful neglect of them is wilful disobedience to God; and therefore renders the
guilty

guilty person liable to death eternal: from all which instances it appears, that a belief in Jesus Christ, a full belief of his Gospel is absolutely and indispensably necessary for the full and perfect understanding of the duties which God requires from us.

2. And secondly it is equally necessary for the clear, and full, and perfect knowledge of the great motives to those duties; namely (1.) that of eternal life, and (2.) the admirable love of God to men declared and evidenced in Jesus Christ, and (3.) the express and clear promises of the assistance of his Spirit to enable us to perform our duties.

1. Certainly the promise of life eternal, upon condition of Faith and Holiness, is the highest motive to obedience; but such a motive, as is so far from being clear to the light of nature, that there was a sect amongst the Jews (who had not only the light of nature, but the Law and Prophets to inform them) that is to say the sect of the Sadducees, who denied the being of Angels or Spirits, and the immortality of mens Souls.

Nor was there any one sect amongst the
Philoso-

Philosophers, but either flatly denied this, as the Epicureans, and some others; or else spake doubtfully in the point, as the Academicks or those of *Plato's* School, or had infinitely false, as well as useless conceptions of it, as the Pythagoreans had of old, who held the transmigration of mens Souls out of one body into another, yea into the bodies of brute Creatures, so that this chief and principal motive to obedience, the very immortality of mens Souls, much more that of their bodies also, was either doubted, or disbelieved, or else believed in such a manner, as rendered it useless to that end amongst the wisest of the Heathen. And as for the common sort of people, who were led by the fictions of the Poets, those did at best no more than fanſie a sensual Paradise after death; which could no more purge and cleanse them from sensual appetites, than the hope and desire of a carnal happiness, can make men holy, pure, and Spiritual.

2. But then further what shall we say of the incomparable love and kindness, that God hath declared to mankind in the Gospel of our blessed Lord? which all the skill of humane wisdom,
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the most improved natural light could never have discovered, or imagined? That God should send his beloved Son into the world to take our nature upon himself, and reveal eternal life to men, and shew them the way to attain unto it by the example of his life! that he should give him to dye for us, to make expiation for our sins! that he should raise him from the dead, and give him power to raise us, and make our very Redeemer himself to become our Head, and give him authority to be our Judg, who knows our frailties by his own experience and sense of them, are demonstrations of such an incomparable love to us, such a concern for our salvation, as would never have entred into the thoughts of mortal men, had it not been thus revealed unto us. These were mysteries hid from Ages, discoveries of a greater love than natural light could have imagined, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Herein is love, saith St John, 1 Ep. 4. 10. not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
And

And so *S^t Paul*, Rom. 5. 8. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.* Now the Gospel having clearly revealed infinitely more of the love of God to mankind, than the light of nature could discover, hath likewise given us infinitely greater and stronger motives to love God, and trust in him, and consequently to obey him, than the light of nature could afford.

3. Add hereunto the exprefs promise, which God made us in the Gospel, of giving his Holy Spirit to us, to strengthen our faith, to confirm our hope, to inflame our love, to enable us to perform the Duties which we cannot perform by the strength of nature. So our Saviour, *Luke 11. 13. If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Could all the skill of humane wisdom, or the best improved natural light, give us such assurance of God's assistance in order to a holy life, as this exprefs Promise gives us? Did the Philosophers ever speak at this rate? Did they dream of Divine assistance to make them wise, and just, and holy? What

What faith Tully in the name of Cotta on this Point? *lib. 3. de natura Deor. Virtutem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit*; No man ever judged he had Vertue from God. And afterwards, *Nunquid quòd bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quòd dives, quòd honoratus, quòd incolumis.* Did ever any man thank the Gods, because he was a good man? No, but because he was rich, and honourable, and safe. These were the things they ascribed to God, but they never dreamed of his assistance to give them Vertue; that they ascribed unto themselves.

Now how could men that never expected God's assistance in the purifying of their hearts and lives, ever attempt to arrive at equal degrees of piety with those that expect and verily hope for that assistance? How could they hope to overcome their inordinate lusts and inclinations? or, whatsoever they might hope, how could they really overcome them without the assistance of God's Spirit? which was a thing they did not only not expect, but flatly rejected and denied, judged it absurd to look for it.

Whereas now on the other hand, the
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firm assurance of a supernatural power and help, to subdue the corruptions of our natures, grounded upon the promise of God, gives those that really believe the Gospel such faith, and hope, and strength, and courage, which gives them victory over the world, and their own inordinate lusts and appetites. From all which instances it appears how many singular helps and motives the Gospel gives us in order to a holy life, which the light of nature cannot give; and consequently that it is most necessary to believe the Gospel over and above all the Principles which the light of nature can discover.

3. Add hereunto in the third place, That as this is necessary for the perfect knowledge of our Duties, and the helps and motives thereunto; so likewise for our support and comfort under all the tryals, fears and troubles that assault us in the present world; whether those arise from, (1.) Outward evils; or, (2.) From inward guilt and fear of punishment.

(1.) And for the former: *Man, says Job, is born for trouble as the sparks fly upward*; that is to say, The state of man is naturally troublesome in this world
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So many are the afflictions and tryals which fall upon us in this life, so many the dangers or disappointments, so many losses and calamities in our names, or persons, or estates, or in the persons related to us, which sour and imbitter the present world, that there is nothing can support us, and make our lives easie to us, but the firm assurance and expectation of a blessed and glorious immortality, which, as I have clearly shewed before, was never found among the Heathen, never clearly known by the light of nature. Could they then so enjoy themselves in all the confusions, in all the calamities of this world, they, who had no assured hope of immortality, as we may do, that have that hope? or as the Primitive Christians did? *We are troubled, says the Apostle, on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9, Not destroyed? no, we do not faint, we do not languish under our troubles; so he adds at the 16. verse, and would you know how they were supported, how sustained under all their tryals, persecutions? that appears from the first*
words

words of the following Chapter. *We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a build-in with God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.* And this it was, this certain knowledge, this which the light of nature wants, which gave support and comfort to them under all their sufferings, and afflictions.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that the light of nature can never give men that assurance of the grace and favour of God towards them, and the remission of their sins, which the Gospel most expressly gives: and therefore never so support us under the fears and sense of guilt, as the declarations of the Gospel.

The Gospel assures us, that God sent his beloved Son *to be the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 4. 10. The Gospel assures us, that the Son of God *appear'd in the presence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24. that he interceeds a Priest for us. The Gospel tells us, that he will continue so to do, so to intercede for ever, and that his intercession for us is most prevalent for our Salvation; that *he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth*

to make intercession for them, Heb. 7. 25. And that he is not able only, but also willing so to do, as being a merciful and faithful High Priest, Heb. 2. 17. upon which account we are exhorted to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 16. And are not these exprefs declarations of the mighty efficacy of Christs Sacrifice to make atonement for our sins, and of his intercession for us to commend us to the favour of God, infinitely great supports to us, under our fears of guilt and punishment? or could the very light of nature give such assurance of Gods mercy to mankind as Gods exprefs promise gives? The light of nature could never give us that assurance. It did indeed convince men of their sin and guilt, and of the danger of Gods displeasure thence arising; and therefore laboured to atone, and to remove divine displeasure by many Sacrifices and Oblations, yea by the blood of humane Sacrifices; but still alas! left the Offerers under great confusions and uncertainties: whereas God hath clearly and exprefsly declared himself reconciled to us by the spotless Sacrifice of his Son S Ha-

Having thus shewed the absolute necessity of believing what the Gospel reveals over and above, what the light of nature can discover, Let us hence observe the sin and danger of those persons, who pretend indeed to believe in God, but not in him, whom God hath sent to be the Redeemer of the World.

1. They reject the *Lord of life* and glory, whom God hath made the very judge of the quick and dead, to whom he hath given all Authority in Heaven and Earth. They reject the head of that body to which alone Salvation is promised, for there is *no name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but that of Christ, Acts 4. 12.* And *he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him, John 3. 36.*

2. Nor can it reasonably be pretended, that the light of nature affords the same helps and motives to make men righteous, good, and holy, which the very Gospel itself affords. There is nothing falser, nothing vainer than that pretence, as I have already clearly shewed. Nor do those men who
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do pretend to believe in God, but yet refuse to believe in Christ, refuse this upon other reasons; but only because the Laws of Christ are too severe, and holy for them: they will not do what he commands, and therefore will not believe the Gospel; nor would they pretend to obey the very light of nature, save only because by these means they gain a liberty of doing as little as they please; for if you reprove them for any sin, their answer is that it is not so by the light of nature. They make that light to be what they please, and then do what they please also, pretending the light of nature allows it.

But let all those, who would not ruin their precious Souls, who do in deed, and good earnest, desire eternal life and happiness, fully and faithfully believe the Gospel; believe in him, who hath thereby brought life and immortality to light, who hath offered himself as a spotless Sacrifice to make expiation of their sins, who, as he is now in Gods presence making intercession for his body; so will appear to the World again at the last day, and reward men according to

their works. Let us all stedfastly believe in him, the only begotten Son of God, for he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life, 1 John 5. 12.

The



The Twelfth Sermon.

Philip. I. 10.

That ye may approve things that are excellent.

Although God, in his infinite wisdom, never enjoined any thing to men, but what, considering all circumstances of times, and places, and persons likewise, was useful and convenient for them, though indifferent in its own nature (such were the numerous Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses's Law*;) yet are there other instances of Duty, which are immutably good in themselves, and therefore proper for all Ages. So are these two general Duties, *to love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbour as our selves.* So are the particular Branches of them, *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world.* And, so with very little exception, are

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all the Duties of the Gospel. Which, impartially tryed and weighed, cannot but be approved as good, even by them that do not practise them.

But a general assent of the understanding, not applied to particular instances of life and action, is far short of the approbation, which the Apostle here designs. For although the word *δοκιμαζεν*, used in the Greek, sometimes signifie something less than a bare assent of the understanding, that is, to try and examine only, as where it is required that we prove all things, (1 Thess. 5. 21;) yet here it signifies much more. Here, as also in other places, it imports such a clear and settled judgment of what is good, as is accompanied with resolution to practise what we judge to be so. This appears from what the Apostle joins in the same period with it, sincerity, and a blameless life; and these retain unto the end. For so is the tenour of his words, *That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.* The same appears from the Style wherein the Apostle speaks. For the words of my Text are part of a Prayer, wherein (after his usual custom of saluting the persons

sons to whom he writes, *ver. 1.* and praying *grace and peace* for them *from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 2.)* after his thanks rendered to God for their *fellowship in the Gospel*, in the following verses of the eighteenth Chapter, he further prays that their *love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, and that they might approve things that are excellent.* Being then the Apostle prays this for them as a thing of singular concernment to them, and being a cold assent of mind, an ineffectual approbation of what is excellent, is a thing of no concern at all, this cannot possibly be the thing which he so heartily prays for them; but what is far more than this, such an approbation of the mind as (upon a full and clear survey of all the differences of good and evil in their natures, issues and effects, both in this and the other world) ends in a certain determination never to deviate from what is good.

So then, taking this for granted (which the Apostle here supposes) that the things prescribed to us in the Gospel, are things excellent, and good for us, wor-

thy to be commanded by God, and reasonable to be practised by us, especially upon the powerful motives, whereupon the Gospel recommends them; the proper subject which these words offer unto our consideration is the approbation of these things, that is, a *clear and stable judgment* in the Duties prescribed to us in the Gospel. In the handling of which Subject, it is most fit that we consider,

1. The singular use and advantage of such a judgment in those Duties.
2. How it may be gained.
3. And lastly, How it must be exercised by them that have attained unto it.

1. And for the first let it be considered, That the judgment which I have now described is of such singular use to us, that it is,

(1.) Both an effectual cure of all the Diseases of our minds, considered absolutely in themselves; and,

(2.) Also a constant Guide and Monitor in every instance of our lives. First, A Guide to discover our Duties to us; and, Secondly, A Monitor to press the practice of them, and steady perseverance in that practice, whatsoever

ever may tempt us to the contrary.

(1.) If we survey the several maladies of our minds, the diseases of humane understanding, there are,

First, Ignorance.

Secondly, Doubt; and

Thirdly, Vanity.

Ignorance of what is true and useful, or *Scepticism* and doubt in what is so, or *Vanity* in applying our minds to things impertinent and useless to us, though we may have certain knowledge of them.

First, The first Disease of the understanding is ignorance of that which is truly good. For as the knowledge of what is so, is the proper perfection of the mind, because it was made to know this (and every thing is perfect in its end;) so the ignorance of what it was made to know, is its greatest malady and imperfection. Ignorance is that Disease in the mind which utter blindness is in the eye, that imperfection in the understanding which darkness would be in the Sun and Stars. 'Tis that which Death is unto Life, its proper ruine and destruction. It hides the face of truth from us, it eclipses all the lustre of goodness, it puts us under the power of error,

error, which vitiates and perverts our choice, and doth not only lead to danger, but also reconcile us to it.

Now just contrary to these effects are those of clear and stable judgment, in things pertaining to life and happiness, or (as the Apostle's expression is) of the *approbation of things excellent*. Truth is to the mind as light to the Sun, its proper lustre, and perfection. Besides it powerfully recommends, and sets off every thing that's good, it shews it in its native colours, and gives it the advantages due unto it, so that (to use the Apostles words, *Philip. 4. 8.*) *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if there be any praise, whatsoever there is that deserves our love, it is so represented in the mind, when the mind is duly informed by truth, that it commends itself to choice, and gains the possession of our hearts: for as we naturally desire and love, what our minds recommend unto us, as good in itself, and for us likewise: so the hearty love of what is good, is the gaining the ve-*
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ry thing we love ; for there is this remarkable difference between the love of good, or evil, and that of all other things in the world, that we may love these other things, and yet fall short of the things themselves ; but he that loves good or evil, is good or evil by so doing. The consequence of which discourse is this, that the approbation of things excellent, a clear and stable judgment in them, is not only the cure of Ignorance, the first disease of the understanding ; but, what is more than I said at first, a powerful and a sovereign medicine to the distempers of our wills, to all our inordinate lusts, and passions.

Secondly, Let us now proceed to the second malady of our minds, from which it is a like deliverance, and that is Scepticism, and suspense in things both evident, and useful to us ; for general assurance, and general doubt, to believe every thing, and nothing at all, are equal distempers of the mind, although of very different kinds ; the one proceeding from vain confidence, the other from the weak suspicions of a shattered, and broken understanding. There are some men, that can make them-

themselves believe any thing, even that their senses are deceived, though duly applyed to their proper objects; and yet pretend the proof of this from a Doctrine which (being grounded on miracle, the proper object of our senses) is grounded upon the truth of sense. So do they, that believe the Doctrine of Transubstantiation; others had rather deceive themselves by the Sophistry of their own wits in nice and uncertain speculations, than content, or owne themselves to be ignorant in things, the knowledge whereof is useles. But then as it cannot be denied, that this is a levity of understanding to pretend certainty in things uncertain: So is it a more unhappy weakness, and a greater craziness of understanding, to doubt and suspend in those things, which are both evident, and useful likewise. A man may doubt in things impertinent to life and happiness without any danger, or fear either; because he neither really is, nor judges himself concerned in them: but if he be doubtful in those things, wherein his greatest concernments lie; if he question the difference of good and evil, if he call Divine Revelation in question, if he doubt
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of the very truth of the Gospel, if he scruple what Christ hath brought to light, eternal life, and immortality; if he be under suspense, and fear what is the way to life immortal; if he question what he shall be hereafter, happy, or miserable, or neither of both, that is, as the very brute that perishes; if he be held in suspense, and doubt of such important things as these; what reelings and fluctuations of mind, what anxieties and pangs of heart, what irresolution in life and practice, must these uncertainties bring upon him? This is part of that very bondage, from which our Saviour came to free us, *who was made partaker of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15.* Which very deliverance Christ hath wrought by the clear discovery, and certain proof of life eternal, and all the means of attaining to it; for so hath he given us a firm foundation of clear, and certain, and stable judgment both in our *duties*, and *rewards*: and so delivered the minds of men from the bondage of suspense and doubt in their
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only true and great concernments.

Thirdly, Now for the vanity of the mind in applying itself to useles things, the last disease of the understanding; this also is effectually cured by the *ap-
probation of things excellent*, that is to say, by sound judgment in all our duties, and rewards, for such a judgment cannot fail to divert our thoughts from needless things, from vain speculations, from idle subtilties, from trivial questions, from angry contentions, and disputes about impertinent and useles things; the itch whereof hath been an epidemical disease in the minds and understandings of men in most ages, and professions; in the Philosophers among the heathen, in the Pharisees among the Jews, in the Schoolmen among the Christians; to say nothing of the Mahometan imposture, which is a trifle from beginning to end: multitudes of volumes have been written upon impertinent and trivial subjects, multitudes of Libraries have been filled with troublesome and unuseful rubbish, with the ruines of humane understanding, for all the vanity we find in books was first of all in the minds of men.

It was the complaint of one of the
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greatest of the heathen, that all the Philosophers before *Socrates* employed their studies in the speculation of those things, which were of very small concernment; and did not only all that while neglect the culture of life and manners, but left the very things they studied in the same obscurity, they found them in. *Socrates* indeed made an attempt to transfer knowledge from useless things into the lives and manners of men, and certainly the attempt was great, but the success was not such, but that still many professors of wisdom mispent their studies in useless trifles and obscurities; the knowledge whereof made no man better, nor ignorance any man ever the worse.

The same disease hath long reign'd among the Jews; those of their writings that are most trifling, *fable* in *history*, and *tattle* in *dispute* (so is their very *Talmud* itself) are most of all valued amongst them. This first began amongst the Pharisees, and was so infectious in that Nation, and so difficult to be removed, when it had once seized the mind, that several Proselytes to Christianity abused themselves, and troubled others with *foolish questions*, and *genealogies*

gies, and contentions and strivings about the law, which the Apostle reprehends as unprofitable and vain, Tit. 3. 9. These are the men whom he describes, 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5. who were proud, knowing nothing, doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmizings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth: where, by the way, we may observe, that they that made the greatest pretence of striving for truth, lost piety, nay truth itself, while they pretended to strive for it.

Now I will not say, that the same dust hath been raised by the Schoolmen among the Christians, that the same vanity and curiosity hath had all the same effects. But this, I think, I may aver, that whatsoever wit the Schoolmen shew in the subjects whereupon they treat, the choice of many of those subjects demonstrates a strange want of judgment.

But to what purpose is this discourse? To clear the use, to shew the necessity of sound judgment in the things the Apostle styles *excellent*, in things pertinent to life, and happiness: which very judgment is in itself an effectual cure of all this vanity of understanding

ing, that diverts the mind from its proper food ; from solid, useful, pertinent truth, from the knowledge of God, and of our selves to trivial disputes, and speculations, which, after all a man's pains and studies, leave his mind vain and empty, his temper proud, and supercilious, and his life (for any thing gained by them) utterly unreform'd, and vitious. So is not he that stedily *approves the things that are excellent* ; for the very excellency of these things thoroughly digested and approved, clears his thoughts, and feeds his mind, and calms his affections, and corrects exorbitant heat, and passion, and powerfully moves and inclines the Soul to sobriety, patience, and humility. So is the third disease of the mind, its vanity in useless speculations together with the effects hereof, perfectly cured by sound judgment in things *excellent*, and worthy knowledge.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that the same judgment is a *constant guide*, and *faithful monitor* to all our duties, in every instance of life, and action.

1. A guide it is, that points out the way to life eternal through all the varieties

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rieties and uncertainties, that perplex the minds, and pervert the practices of them that want it: a guide it is, that doth not stoop to groundless dictates, that is not frightened with bold *Anathema's*, nor yet misled by soft persuasions, by fair pretences or shews of Piety; no mans confidence shall amuse it, no mans zeal impose upon it. If it be said, *loe here is Christ*, here an unerring way to life: If it be said on the other hand, *no, he is not there*, but here; there is nothing but imposture under the name of infallibility, nothing but Vanity and Superstition under a mask of external piety. But here is the spirit of Jesus Christ, here is his Doctrine truly preached, here are his ordinances pure and entire without humane mixtures, and inventions; he that hath clear and stable judgment in the things, the Apostle stiles excellent, knows what to believe, and what to practice in the midst of all this noise, and clamour. He is not put upon demurrs, first to doubt, and then to put off, and delay his duty, till interest, passion, or example, till the hopes or fears of the present world prejudice, and beguile his judgment; much less
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by a mistaken zeal to pursue a *crime* instead of a *duty*, and think he is doing God service, when he is violating Gods Laws, breaking the peace of a Church, or State, or censuring those, whom he ought to honour. Such is the singular help we have from the approbation of things excellent, from stable judgment in all these things. It is a constant guide unto us to shew us what our duties are in every instance of life, and action.

2. Nor is it only a ready guide, but a faithful monitor to these duties: for judgment inform'd by practical truth is one and the same thing with conscience, and conscience is *θεοῦ ἔκδοξος*, conscience is a domestick God, conscience is Gods vicegerent in us, which both declares our duties to us and powerfully presses us to obedience. No man offends it, but wounds himself, no man follows it, but finds content in so doing: whence that practice of *St Paul* recorded in his own words, *Acts 24. 16. Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

And certainly did we take a survey of all the several considerations, that recommend our duties to us, and then so fix these considerations in our thoughts,

as to turn them into a stable judgment, this would so confirm and strengthen us in the choice, and practice of what is good, as that neither the hopes, nor fears, the charms, nor dreads of the present World should move us to a wilful sin.

Let a man consider that his duties are made to be so by the Laws of God, who, having made us out of nothing, hath made himself our Sovereign Lord by so doing, and being so, hath all Authority to command us. Let him consider that these Laws are good, and excellent in themselves, as highly tending to the welfare both of Societies, and single persons. Let him consider with what variety of application God recommends our duties to us, how he exhorts, invites, and intreats, how he expostulates, and reasons with us, how he upbraids, and chides our folly in many places of the Scripture. Let him consider what he hath done, and what he hath promised to do hereafter, that he may persuade us to obedience, that he hath given his Son to die for us, to redeem us both from sin, and punishment, and promised his grace to assist obedience, and eternal happiness to reward it: And having considered all these things,
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and digested the consideration of them into a firm and settled judgment, can we imagine that such a judgment shall not persuade a free choice and ready practice of every thing thus recommended to him?

Especially if he shall further consider, what are the principles within himself, and what the temptations also without, that urge him to reject his duty: and what unhappy and sad effects attend the wilful rejection of it.

The principles within, that corrupt our choice, and practice too, are (as *S^t John* himself hath told us, *1 John 2. 16.*) *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, sensuality, covetousness, and ambition: infatuations as well as sins, and torments as well as infatuations; especially in their effects and issues, in the cares, and Envyings, and Animosities, which they kindle upon the minds of men. The temptations that move these vain desires are bodily pleasures, secular riches, and the esteem of vain men (for none but such can value a proud ambitious person:) These are the things, even these which are not satisfactions to the mind of the meanest man in the World, these which bring re-

grets and pangs, cares, and anxieties, death, and misery along with them, that tempt us to forsake our duties: These are the things, that offer themselves in recompence for the loss of innocence, the loss of holiness and true righteousness, the very Image of God himself: These are the things that offer themselves in recompence for the loss of peace of Conscience, of Gods favour, and the care of his good providence over us. Nay these are the things that present themselves in exchange for our immortal Souls, the loss whereof cannot be made up by gaining the whole world it self; *for what shall it profit a man, saith our Saviour, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?* Mark 8. 36, 37.

So then let a man take an exact survey of all that recommends his duty, and of all that moves him to forsake it. and then compare them both together; and the comparison will be thus:

On one hand there is the law of God, who hath all Authority to command him, on the other his own extravagant passions, urging him to forsake that Law; on one hand behold all the virtues

tues, all the graces of Christianity, that is to say, all the perfections of humane nature; on the other all its sins, and follies, all its degeneracies, and decays: on one hand there are stable joys, peace of Conscience, peace with God, and assurance of his grace and favour; on the other muddy and fleeting pleasures, mixt with abundance of regrets: on the one hand clear and settled hopes of future life, and immortality; on the other want of these hopes, nay the fears and dreads of eternal misery.

Now when a man makes this comparison, when he clearly discerns, and firmly judges of all these things, as this comparison represents them, when he applies this judgment to every instance of life and action, is it not an effectual principle to restrain him from every wilful sin, to urge, and press him to every duty? will he chuse what is no way recommended? and refuse what is represented to him under all the motives to choice, and practice?

No man chuses, or doth amiss, but he that is ignorant, or forgetful either in the nature of good, and evil, or in the effects, and issues of them. If there be nothing of this in the case, let the

charms of the world entice to evil, he knows they are deceits and vanities, and cannot believe what he knows is false, nor be cheated by what he doth not believe. Let the dreads and calamities of the world encomber and perplex his duties, he *reckons* (as the Apostle speaks) *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. This gives him courage, strength, and patience, and makes him chuse afflicted innocence, rather than guilty, and short prosperity. Insomuch that all the great examples of the highest and the noblest vertues, all these victories over the world, and all its troubles and adversities, that are recorded in Sacred History, all the great things that have been done, all the great things that have been suffered for the advancement of Truth and Piety, have sprung from a settled resolution (grounded upon stable judgment) never to vary from Gods will, and the way to everlasting happiness. So *Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Ægypt*, Heb. 11. 26. So Christ himself for that joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the
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the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, Heb. 12. 2. And so did his first and faithful followers (for the securing of their innocence, and the rewards thereunto belonging) patiently endure all their sufferings, as knowing that their *light affliction, which was but for a moment, wrought for them a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.* Thus is the approbation of things excellent that is, a clear and stable judgment in all the duties of the Gospel as there declared, and recommended, not only a perfect cure and remedy of all the diseases of our minds, to wit, Ignorance, Doubt, and Vanity, but also a constant guide and monitor in the whole course of our lives in the World. Which being so,

2. Let us now consider what are the means of attaining to it, the second head before propounded.

1. And here I shall not need to say, that since *every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights (Jam. 1. 17.)* it must be sought of God by prayer: Men may be rich, and great, and powerful, meerly by the permission of Providence, by practices not allow'd by God, by
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fraud, and injury, and oppression. But no man is wise unto salvation but by the special grace of God, nor doth he give this special grace, but where it is diligently sought of him, which was the reason why *S^t Paul* so often puts it into his Prayers, that God would bless men with this wisdom. So he prays for *Timothy* that God would give him *understanding in all things*, 2 Tim. 2. 7. for the *Ephesians*, That the God of our Lord *Jesus Christ* the Father of glory, would give unto them the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him, Eph. 1. 17. for the *Colossians*, that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding, Col. 1. 9. and lastly for the *Philippians* here, that there love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that they might approve the things that are excellent: from all which prayers to God for wisdom, for sound judgment in all our duties, as represented in the Gospel, we learn that it is the gift of God, and to be sought by fervent Prayer, especially seeing that God hath promised to give his spirit to them that ask him, and that in a promise confirmed by an argument

gment drawn from common and known experience: for so is that *Luke 11. 13.* *If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

2. Nor shall I need to put you in mind that to our Prayers for the illumination of Gods grace, something of industry must be joyned, in the study both our of duties themselves, and the motives that recommend them to us: And yet, in truth, both these things are partly so written upon our hearts, and, since the revelation of the Gospel, so expressly declared to us, that we need not weary or waste our bodies, nor vex and torment our understanding to gain the knowledge of either of them. We need not now, as *St. Paul* tells us, *say in our hearts who shall ascend into Heaven? That is to bring down Christ from above, to reveal the mind of God to us? Or, who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead, that he may confirm that Revelation?* both these things are already done,

done, so that now, as the Apostle adds, Rom. 10. 8, 9. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Where we see the Apostle takes it for granted, that he that firmly believed the Gospel, could scarce fail in the very practice, much less in the knowledge and approbation of what is necessary to salvation; so clearly are all our duties revealed, and so effectually recommended in the Gospel.

3. So that what is now mainly requisite to gain a clear and stable judgment in the good and perfect will of God, is so much antecedent probity, so much sincerity towards God, as that we are willing to do his will, when it shall be made known unto us: and wonder not that this should be requisite for the gaining of stable judgment in it; for this is no more, than the very belief that there is a God, may produce in every man so believing.

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If a man have nothing of inclination to do Gods will when he shall know it, why should God reveal it to him? or, supposing (what is so indeed) that he hath revealed it in the Gospel; yet how unapt a man is to believe what he is resolved not to practise? and what, if believed, and not practised, will be a perpetual anguish to him. How easie is it in this case, when the interests of powerful lusts and passions, bribe and corrupt the understanding, for a man to prevaricate with himself, and baffle, and cheat his own mind?

But where there are honest inclinations to do Gods will in case it be known and understood, these open the eye of the understanding, these let the light of truth into it, and so our Saviour tells the Jews, *John 7. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* He shall rightly judge of it. For such is the nature of Christianity, so holy and excellent in it self, so clearly delivered, and confirm'd, that want of will to obey the Doctrine, and that where there are most cogent motives to produce that very will in us, is the only cause of want of faith, and
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judgment in it. So powerful an instrument is the Gospel to produce a clear and stable judgment in all things excellent in themselves, and requisite to our eternal happiness.

3. Now the method of using such judgment (which is the last of those particulars which I propounded to be considered) lies in the application of it to every deliberate design and action, in every circumstance of our lives, and in firm purposes and resolutions never to stray or vary from it: As having taken it up at first, when our minds were clear, and free from prejudice, and that upon such grounds and reasons, as nothing should shake, or alter it in us; not all the Sophistry of our lusts, not all the seductions of temptation, not all the allurements of ill example; not all the advantages, nor all the calamities of the World.

And therefore whensoever we do incline to stray and deviate from that judgment, which we have before fixt and settled, as the best and wisest principle of life, whensoever we find those resolutions, which that Judgment did produce, begin to shake, and waver in us, we must remember (what is most certain)

certain) that we are then under a temptation; that every temptation is a lie, a meer seduction, and imposture, *for every man is tempted (saith St James) when he is drawn aside by his own lust, and enticed (Jam. I. 14.)* courted to injure his own Soul: for so it follows in the next words. *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.*

If therefore temptation gild the sin with the lustre of wealth, and power, and honour, with the shew of safety, ease, and pleasure, we must remember that all this gloss that seems to shine on the face of evil, is but the cheat of our own fancies, the dream of vain imagination; we must remember that time will come, when all this varnish will melt away, and then will things appear again, as they are in themselves, and their true effects, and as we before judged of them. And why should we change our minds, and judgments when there is no change in the things themselves? why should we alter our resolutions, while the things resolved are equally good, equally necessary, as they were at that very time and moment, when we first took up those resolutions?

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On the other hand, if the temptation, that sets a gloss on the face of evil, misrepresent our duties to us, as hard and difficult to be performed, as prejudicial to our contents, as dangerous to our Estates, or interests in the world; we must remember that these suggestions proceed from mean desires and fears, that these insatuate and darken Counsel, that if we hearken and yield to them, we shall lose that which is infinitely better than all the advantages, all the pleasures of the world, and suffer that which is infinitely worse than all its troubles and calamities; lose Gods favour, and our own innocence, and the rewards thereunto belonging, and suffer the insupportable effects of his displeasure in another life.

But if we stedfastly persevere in the choice and practice of our duties through all the varieties of temptations, which assault us in this vain world: If we live by rule, and not by shift, by principle, and not by chance, and occasion; then shall we preserve our own Integrity, continue in Gods grace and favour, secure the peace of our own spirits, grow to an excellent habit of mind, in its strength and steadiness, and tranquillity; and

and finally, after all our trials, and all the joys of triumph over them, enter into our Masters joy, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the World.

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The Thirteenth Sermon.

John 7. 17.

*If any man will do his will, he shall know
of the doctrine, whether it be of God,
or whether I speak of my self.*

WE live in a very inquisitive age, wherein it is very much disputed what is the true Doctrine of Christ, and what are the most effectual means to find it out, and understand it: It is disputed, what is the rule of Christian Faith: It is disputed, what is the way certainly to understand that rule; and amongst some it is disputed how we are sure that rule is true, whatsoever we understand to be so. In the mean time, while it is disputed what is truth, Piety is very much neglected, men do not heartily study truth in order to the practice of it, they do not seek it with true design to live in due obedience to it;

it ; and this indeed is one great cause, why the disputes concerning truth prove so endless, and successless, for did men study the will of God with hearty and sincere designs to practise it when they understand it, they would soon attain the knowledge and belief of what is necessary to be known, for so we learn from these words: *If any man will do his will.* In which words we may observe,

1. An Antecedent, *If any man will do his will.*

2. A Consequent, *He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* Both which parts I shall,

1. Explain, and,

2. Then speak to the sense of the whole in an observation from the Consequence ; and first of all for the Antecedent: *If any man will do his will.* We must consider,

1. That the persons that are designed in these words are those only to whom the Gospel is proposed, not those to whom it is not propounded. I do not undertake to determine how far those of the heathen world may desire to know or do Gods will, nor how far

far God may, or may not exprefs any favour, or mercy to them; but this is all I undertake, that the declaration or promise of Christ concerns those persons, and those only, to whom his Doctrine is propounded: for as for others, *S^t Paul* himself gives us this account of them, *Rom. 10. 14.* *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher.* From whence it appears that there is no general promise made (and therefore none in these words of Christ) that men should believe Christs Doctrine, unless it should be propounded to them.

2. To this I add in the second place, that as this promise or declaration concerns no persons but only them, to whom the Gospel is proposed: so doth it not concern any, but those to whom it is proposed truly, and upon true accounts; that is to say, with the proper arguments which our Saviour used to confirm his Doctrine; If his Doctrine be not truly proposed it is not really his Doctrine, but it is the opinion of the preacher; and it is not any mans own opinion, but it is the true Doctrine of Christ to
which

which the promise of Christ belongs.

And then further, if the very true Doctrine of Christ be not propounded by true arguments, by those arguments and demonstrations, which Christ himself and his Apostles have afforded for the proof of the truth of it, it may possibly fail of gaining credit for want of true and proper evidence: if men shall labour to prove the Gospel by arguments of their own invention, and not by miracles and predictions, not by the true and proper arguments, which were intended for its proof; the weakness of them that do propose it, may prejudice the truth which is proposed, and that with those very men themselves, who were disposed to entertain it.

2. Now these are they, who are ready to do the will of God, when it appears to be his will; If any man says Christ will do his will, that is to say, whosoever he be, that is so disposed, so affected towards God, as that he is willing to do, or suffer whatsoever God shall require of him, when it appears that God requires it, whosoever is upright and sincere, not prejudiced by any inordinate lust, by Pride, or Avarice or Sensuality, but willing to o-

bey the commands of God, this man will believe the Gospel, when truly and sufficiently propounded to him, propounded as it is to us.

2. So it follows in the Consequent : *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

1. In which Consequent, the *Doctrine* was that which was taught by Christ, and that which he taught was his Gospel.

2. And then whereas it is further added, that, *if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether our Lord spake of himself, or whether he spake of God,* this is not so to be understood as if there were any doubt at all, whether he spake of God, or not; but as a peremptory affirmation, that what he spake, was the word of God, so that the sense of the words is this: That whosoever is so disposed and inclined, as that he is willing to do *Gods will*, will readily believe the Gospel of Christ, when truly and sufficiently propounded to him.

These things explained, the observation the words offer us is this :

That a hearty and sincere inclination to do whatsoever God commands, is a
most

most powerful preparation to understand and believe the Gospel, I do not say, that none but they who are thus prepared do ever believe, or understand it; for experience often shews the contrary; this it shews in all those persons, who believe it and yet obey it not, and of these no doubt, there are great numbers; but this I say, that they who are really thus disposed, are under a powerful preparation to believe the Doctrine of the Gospel, as will appear from several reasons. For,

I. First of all, whosoever he be that is thus prepared, whose heart and will is sincerely bent to do whatsoever God shall command him, the same person will not neglect the use of sincere and true endeavours to inform himself, especially in the Doctrine of Christ, which threatens no less than death eternal to them that refuse and disobey it; and promises everlasting happiness to all that believe it, and obey it.

Whosoever is willing to do Gods will, when he knows it, is willing to know and understand it, in order to the doing of it. The same probity, the same sincerity of heart and will, which doth dispose him to the one, dis-

poses him also to the other: He that will not endeavour to know *Gods will*, will not obey it, though he know it; he that will obey it, when he knows it, will labour sincerely to know it also; and certainly this is a fair step to gain the belief and knowledge of it; we do not find in the whole Gospel that any one man refused the Gospel, who duly considered what it was, and the miracles done for the proof of it; *Nicodemus* considering these miracles, concludes that Christ was sent of God; *Rabbi*, saith he, *we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles except God be with him*, John 3. 2.

Lydia attending to the Gospel readily believed and entertained it, *Acts* 16. 14. The *Bereans* who applied themselves to consider the Gospel preached unto them, and compared it with the ancient Prophecies, readily believed and entertained it, *Acts* 17, 12. nor doth it appear that any person who did impartially apply himself to consider it, and the proofs of it, did ever refuse or disbelieve it; which is no small or obscure evidence, that whosoever uses his best endeavours to understand the will of God,

God, as every sincere person doth, shall not fail to believe the Gospel duly and rightly propounded to him.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that a true and hearty inclination to do whatsoever God commands, removes those inward dispositions of Pride, and Avarice, and Sensuality, which are the causes of Infidelity. Truth hath no enemy but Vice, men never disbelieve the Gospel but upon some prejudice they have against it, nor are they prejudiced against the Gospel, but by their lusts, which it forbids and threatens with most severe punishment. *This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* Truth is rejected and disbelieved, because disgusted and disrelished; it is disrelished, because it forbids, because it reproves and controlls those lusts to which men have enthralled themselves, which hold them in bondage, and captivity.

1. If we consider the matters of practice which are commanded in the Gospel, they are so suitable to our reason, they

they are so plainly good for the World, they do so evidently design our happiness, they are every way so becoming God, that it can be nothing but the prejudice of mens unreasonable lusts and passions, that can perswade any man in the world, that the Laws prescribed us in the Gospel, are not the Laws of the living God, especially since the first publication of these Laws were confirmed with many, and great miracles: Could any man living make a doubt whether it was the will of God, or not, that we should love him with all our hearts, and do to men as we would that they should do to us, were he not prejudiced by his lusts? Is it any thing else but want of willingness to do Gods will, that can raise a scruple in any mans mind, whether these things be his will or not?

And though the Gospel in some cases, that is, when truth is contradicted, require us rather to suffer for it, than to forsake or to deny it, yet seeing suffering in this case evidently tends to confirm the truth, to the glory of God, to the good of the World, and hath also the promise of life eternal: This very love of patient suffering in this case, cannot offend

offend the minds of any, but those that are prejudiced by their lusts, those who will not do Gods will, although sufficiently propounded to them.

2. As for those Articles of our faith, that do not contain matter of practice, since there is nothing of contradiction, nothing at all of absurdness in them; since those that declare matter of fact as that our Lord lived, and dyed, and rose again, and sent the Spirit to his Apostles, are attested by universal consent of those that could not but know the truth, and had no reason to abuse it; since all the rest were clearly confirmed by evident and undeniable miracles, there is no cause we can imagine, why any man should doubt or disbelieve them, save only prejudice against the precepts, against the Laws of the same Gospel, wherein these Doctrines are revealed; so that whosoever is so disposed, as that he is willing to do Gods will, is under an effectual preparation to believe and entertain the Gospel whensoever duly propounded to him.

3. Add hereunto in the third place, that God hath promised his holy Spirit to assist the upright and sincere, and
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that a willingness to do Gods will whenever we know and understand it, is the very nature of sincerity. *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, Luk. 11. 9.* and afterwards at the 13th verse, *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him.* To whom is this promise of the Spirit made? if unto all that pray for it, much more to them that sincerely ask it; to these at least, or else to none; to these although to no other persons. *The meek, says David, will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way, Psal. 25. 9.* and more expressly at the 14th verse, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant,* them will he bless with his assistance, them will he guide by his Holy Spirit, them will he govern and direct; for as he sometimes offers his grace to them that refuse to entertain it, so he never denies it to them that do sincerely desire, and use it.

Now then to conclude the point in hand, being they that are willing to do
 Gods

Gods will, are willing to use the best endeavour to understand it, being they are free from those prejudices, that hinder the understanding of it; being they have the promise of God to guide and assist them to this purpose: hence we conclude what we have observed, that a hearty and sincere inclination to do *Gods will* is a most effectual preparation to understand and believe the Gospel.

Now for the uses of this point.

1. Hence you see, that God is not wanting to those persons who can reasonably expect assistance from him, to those that are willing to *do his will*, when it is duly discovered to them; whosoever he is that is thus disposed, may assure himself of Gods assistance to guide him into all needful truth, into all things necessary to salvation; whosoever is not thus disposed, cannot justly expect assistance from him; for why should God make known his will, where it is certain before hand, that it will not be complied withall? why should he discourse his will to them, who are resolved to serve their lusts whatsoever the will of God should be? nay to them, who will scarce believe any thing
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that contradicts their lusts and passions, though never so duly propounded to them; which is the case of every false insincere person, who is resolved to believe nothing, which doth not comply with his own corruptions? God hath not promised that they shall see, who suffer their lusts to shut their eyes, who are not willing to have the light, nor was their reason for such a promise. This fully acquits Gods providence, that he hath taken sufficient care so to recommend the Gospel in all things needful for Salvation, to give such evidence of its truth, that whosoever is disposed to do whatsoever God commands (which the light of nature it self suggests) shall easily know and entertain whatsoever is necessary to Salvation; such is the course that God hath taken in the revelation of the Gospel, and of all things necessary to Salvation, that none will complain of want of evidence, but only those that want integrity, those who will not do Gods will, although they know and understand it. And for this they are to blame themselves, and consequently for the effects of it, their infidelity or misbelief.

2. But then secondly, seeing they
that

that are willing to do Gods will, find the Gospel so attested, as that they who will give credit to it, shall know and understand whatsoever is necessary to Salvation: hence we may guess at the great cause of infidelity and misbelief, wheresoever the Gospel is revealed. The Gospel forbids, the Gospel threatens the sinful lusts and lives of men, and therefore they who resolve to continue in their sins, cavil, and quarrel, and contradict it; they hate that Doctrine which reproves them, and will not believe what they hate, although it flash in their very faces. These men *seeing see not, and hearing they hear not*, saith our Lord, and in them is fulfilled the Prophecie of *Isaiab*, which saith, *by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive*, Matt. 13. 14.

And as there are some who disbelieve the whole Gospel meerly in favour of their lusts: so others upon the same account grossly mistake and misunderstand it: They will admit no sense of it, but what is consistent with their sins, what gives them leave to enjoy their lusts, and hope for pardon notwithstanding.

Men who resolve to retain their lusts,
who

who will not part with their darling sins upon any conditions whatsoever, must search out easie ways to Heaven, find out other terms of Salvation than what the Gospel hath propounded. Let the Gospel be never so express in the denunciations of Gods displeasure against those sins they live in, they must find out some arts and shifts to evade and escape the plainest truths by some reserves, or false glosses, by clouding what is plain and evident. Let it be never so expressly said, and that by our blessed Lord himself, *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; — and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell, Matt. 5. 29, 30.* These men must find out some distinctions, whereby they may retain that eye, whereby they may reserve that hand, secure their dearly beloved lusts, and yet escape the flames of Hell. It shall be answered to these and all other like expressions, either that this is legal Doctrine, and that Christ hath so fulfilled the Law, as that there is nothing for them to do, but to rely on his righteousness

ousness, or else (as it is on another hand) that they will make satisfaction to God for those sins, which they will not forsake; they will confess them to the Priest, they will receive his absolution, they will most duly perform the penance which is prescribed them by the Priest, give so much Alms, say so many Prayers, pass through a course of so many fasts. And when they have found out these shifts, then will they believe their sins forgiven, although they willfully still retain them: they will believe that this is so, in spite of common sense and reason, in spite of the very light of nature, in spite of the holy Scripture it self, and the plain design of Christianity; they will have a Creed which shall allow them in their lusts, though clearly contrary to that Gospel, which our Lord himself hath revealed to us. From whence observe, that no man can be secure of truth, who is no friend to real Piety; nor is he likely to understand the will of God, who is not willing to obey it.

3. Hence we understand, that the only safe and certain way to know the will of God aright, to know what true Religion is, and what is the way

to life eternal, is such a sincere disposition of mind, as renders us willing to obey whatsoever God prescribes unto us. For so is the Gospel propounded to us, that whosoever is so disposed, will readily believe and entertain it upon the evidence which attends it, seeing nothing obscures, nothing eclipses this evidence, but an aversation to the duties, which are commanded in the Gospel.

There is no Doctrine, no precept, no promise, or threat in the whole Gospel, that contradicts the hopes or interests of any man that is really good. 'Tis no interest of good men, that there should not be a day of judgment, that Christ should not come to judge the World, that he should not judge it by these Laws, which are prescribed us in the Gospel. 'Tis no interest of good men, that any thing should not be commanded, which is commanded in the Gospel; that every thing should not be forbidden, which the same Gospel doth forbid; on the other hand, it is most suitable not only to the judgment and reason, but to the inclinations of good men, that God should command us to love himself with all our hearts,
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to love our neighbours as our selves; that he should command all the virtues that are commanded in the Gospels truth, justice, temperance, patience, meekness, humility and the like; that he should forbid what is forbidden, pride, and covetousness, and animosity, fornication, adultery, and excess; it is suitable to their reason and hopes, that he should distribute rewards and punishments in another world, according to mens behaviour here; and who-soever is thus prepared to understand and believe the Gospel, will neither reject nor misbelieve it, nor any thing that is contained in it, which is absolutely necessary to Salvation, especially seeing that God hath promised to guide and assist them with his Spirit, who are resigned unto his will, and willing to do what he commands them.

Observe we then, the great security that good men have of being led into all truth, which is needful unto their Salvation: observe what is the ready way to be guided into all such truth, it is to be upright and sincere, it is to be willing to do Gods will, willing to do whatsoever it be, that God shall please to require of us. If you find
X 2 this

The Thirteenth Sermon.

this willingness in your selves, suffer not your selves to be overborn with their confidence who vainly boast of infallibility in the midst of most pernicious errors, and in plain contradiction to the Scripture. Truth is plain to them that love it, to them that are willing to entertain it; but as for them, that are insincere, that have no hearty love to it, the plainest things are obscure to them, *showers and snares are in the way of the froward*, Prov. 22. 5. which way soever they turn themselves, *because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie*, 2 Thes. 10. 11.

4. Now therefore let the consideration of what I have said upon this point perswade sincerity towards God, perswade to willingness, to obedience in every instance whatsoever.

Sincerity is that which doth dispose us to know and believe all needful truth, sincerity is that which God will bless with the assistance of his Spirit, sincerity is that which he will reward, not only with his conduct here, but also with eternal happiness and everlasting life in the world to come.

The

The Fourteenth Sermon.

Malach. 1. 6.

If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear?

The former part of the verse is thus:

A son honoureth his Father, and a servant his Master. If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear?

THERE are several relative names or titles given to God in the Holy Scriptures, amongst which are these of *Father*, and *Master*: He is styled our *Father*, because we receive life from him: He is called our *Master*, because he hath a just dominion over us. And because he is such a *Father* to us, as hath created us out of nothing, therefore are we entirely his; and because we are entirely so, therefore is he such a

X 3 *Master,*

The Fourteenth Sermon.

Master, as hath most absolute and most Sovereign Dominion over us; upon which account he may, and doth require the highest *love*, and *fear*, and the most sincere obedience from us. The neglect whereof in the persons, to whom the Prophet here applies himself, was the cause of this exhortation: *If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear?*

I shall not insist on these two duties we owe to God, that is to say, *honour*, and *fear*, apart and distinctly from one another: But rather observe, that such an *honour* is due to God, as comprehends a *fear* in it, and such a *fear*, as also contains an *honour* in it; from both which things put together, there results a filial awe, or *reverence*, which is compounded of love and fear, of love to God, as he is our *Father*, and then of fear, as he is our *Master*.

This *reverence* then is the duty suggested in the words before us, which I shall pursue in this method.

I shall shew,

1. The degrees of *reverence* which God requires.
2. The proper effects of it.
3. The contradictions to it.

4. To

4. To which I shall add some considerations to produce this reverence towards God, both in it self, and in its effects, and to restrain us from all contradictions to it.

1. And for the first; The degrees of reverence which God requires can be no less, than the very greatest, that the Soul of man is capable of: For whereas the reverence we owe to God consists as I said, of love, and fear,

1. Both these are expressly required by God in the very highest and greatest measures: Such are the measures of love to God commanded by our Lord himself, *Matt. 22. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;* to which he adds, that we may see, how indispensably that is required. *This is the first, and great commandment:* And such are the measures of fear also which Christ commands towards God, *Luk. 12. 4, 5. Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, yea I say unto you fear him:* Where both the motive which he pro-

X 4 pounds

pounds to excite and awake this fear in us, which is no less than the very danger of Hell it self, and the reduplication of the command, *fear him* whom I shall mention to you, *yea I say unto you, fear him*; evidently shew that God requires the highest measures of fear from us.

2. Now God hath demanded the greatest measures of filial reverence of love, and fear.

1. In conformity to his infinite goodness, both in it self, and towards us, and to the Sovereignty and Dominion which he hath over us, and all his creatures, which is most absolute, and entire. He is so good, as that he merits our highest love: He is so great, that he demands the highest fear: He is such a *Father*, as that his admirable bounty to us, ought to inflame all within us with the greatest love and affection to him: He is such a *Master*, whose infinite greatness in himself, and absolute Sovereignty over us ought to create the greatest fear.

2. Especially seeing that lower measures of love and fear, than those we have for any thing else, will not secure our duty to him.

For

For suppose we love any thing, or person in all the World more than we love God himself; then, when that thing, or that person comes in competition with him, the love we have for either of these will overcome our love to God, and cause the neglect, or the violation of our duty to him. And thus in truth it comes to pass, that the pleasures and interests, the delights and advantages of this World resist, and baffle, and overcome mens obligations to God Almighty. They love these things more than they love God himself, and so that love commands their wills, rules their affections, governs their thoughts, forms their designs in contradiction to Gods commands, and the great concernments of their Souls. They are in bondage to the world, to the wealth, and honour, and pleasures of it, being enslaved and overcome by their inordinate love to them, *for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage,* 2 Pet. 2. 19.

And then again on the other hand, suppose we fear any person, or thing more than God, and his displeasures, and the severe effects thereof, it cannot be but that the greater fear must conquer

quer and overcome the less; whenever there falls a contest between them, it will so infatuate and blind the man possessed and over-aw'd by it, as to throw him into a greater danger, namely, that of future misery, that he may at present escape a lesser, that is, the loss of wealth, or power, or reputation, any pleasures and satisfactions, the loss whereof he more resents, than that of the favour of God himself, and the rewards that he hath promised. And this is the reason, why our Lord, as you heard before, allows no fear of the very loss of life it self, in compare with the fear of Gods displeasure, *Luk.* 12. 4, 5. This is the reason, why he allows no love neither to the nearest relations, and concernments, which may not duly be styled *hatred*, and is so styled by him himself, in comparison with that we owe to him, *Luk.* 14. 26. namely, because the greatest love, and the greatest fear, that is to say, the highest *reverence* is due to God.

A less *reverence* than this is, will not answer Gods express command; less than this will not comport with his infinite goodness in it self, with his admirable bounty towards us, or with his
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his entire Dominion over us ; less than this will not secure our duty to him.

2. Having thus dispatched the first general, where I have shewed the degrees of *reverence* we owe to God ; proceed we now unto the second, namely, the proper effects of it. And this I the rather insist upon, because there are few, but will at least profess an awe, pretend a reverence to God Almighty. But how shall we know that this profession is true, and real ? no other way, but by a singular care and diligence to do whatsoever he commands, and avoid whatsoever he hath forbidden. So true is this, that the very pretence of love, or fear to God Almighty, without the study of obedience, is a demonstration of irreverence, as being an evidence of Hypocrisie ; and this a contempt of God himself, as supposing him capable to be deceived by meer profession and pretence, or to be charm'd and pleas'd by flattery, where he knows there is nothing of sincerity.

Fear it self, where it is serious, being joyned as it is in every person, with a love and kindness to himself, cannot fail to command a care to serve and
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please the person feared. Fear carries danger in its eye, and danger lays a severe restraint upon every appetite and inclination that leads unto it; danger excites us to endeavour to secure and deliver our selves from it, when it is duly apprehended, insomuch that the clear and firm belief, join'd with the serious consideration of the miseries threatned to disobedience, cannot but check, and restrain us from it. The serious belief of what's to come, cannot consist with wilful sin and disobedience; for such belief will either subdue and overcome the pleasures and satisfactions of sin, or else these pleasures and satisfactions eclipse and extinguish that belief: They cannot possibly dwell together, men cannot indulge themselves in evil, while they enjoy no pleasure in it; they can enjoy no pleasure in it, while they so believe as to dread the punishment threatned to it: Their lusts will be so uneasie to them, being under the awe of fear and dread, that they will be forced to cast them off, for their own ease and satisfaction. And this is the reason why those ages, wherein the Gospel is clearliest taught and understood, produce the best, and the worst

worst men, too ; for where the Gospel is proposed in the simplicity and truth thereof, those that believe and entertain it, are highly improved and bettered by it ; but those that resolve not to reform upon any motives, any incitements whatsoever, are forced for their own ease and quiet, to abandon the very belief of it ; and having rejected this belief, become exposed to the greatest evils without the restraint and contradiction of any remorse and regrets : They have lost that very fear and dread, which, wheresoever it is retained cannot but put a restraint and awe upon all those sinful inclinations, that lead to future death and misery.

And now, if the very fear of God, where it is serious and considerate, that is to say, where it is the thing it pretends to be, carry so great a power in it, to command and press obedience to him ; how much greater must that power grow, when love being added unto fear, turns it into a filial *reverence*, and puts another nature into it ? Love freely offers what fear constrains : Love makes that easie and delightful, which was a burden unto fear ; nay Love itself constrains likewise, but without reluctance

stancy and opposition, for it removes
 these very things, and this is the mean-
 ing of St Paul, 2 Cor. 5. 14. *The love of*
Christ, saith he, *constrains us*; we can-
 not resist its Sovereign Power, we can-
 not oppose its mighty influence, but
 freely surrender all within us, all our
 powers and inclinations into obedience
 to our Lord, *who dyed for us and rose*
again. And to refuse him this obedi-
 ence would be an eclipse of our own
 joys, would be to resist our own de-
 sires, would be a violence to our selves,
 such an other violence and contradicti-
 on, as it would be to our Lord him-
 self. And this is the reason why our
 Lord hath represented our love to him
 as a certain principle of obedience,
John 14. 23. If a man love me he will
keep my words. He can no more love
 and offend, love and displease me both
 together, than he can chuse to vex him-
 self, and willingly practise and embrace
 a contradiction to his will; and although
 my precepts may engage him to take
 up his cross for my sake, and his own
 Salvation, yet will not this be grievous
 to him, seeing the love I had for him
 moved me to do the same thing, yea
 infinitely greater for his sake.

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Now then, to conclude this second general, seeing that *reverence* to God Almighty carries both fear, and love in it, seeing love and fear cannot fail to produce obedience to him, hence I conclude that this obedience is such an effect of that *reverence*, as cannot be rent and divided from it.

3. Proceed we now to the third general, where I am to shew the contradictions to that *reverence*, and those are not only those very acts, which are usually styled contempt, and scorn, and are in themselves expressly so; but all such actions, and omissions, as evidently flow from gross neglect, and want of *reverence* towards God, that is to say, all deliberate and wilful sins. And this appears from the very words of God himself: *A son, saith he, honoureth his Father, and a servant his Master, If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Host unto you, O Priests, that despise my name, and ye say, wherein have we despised thy name?* They wondered, it seems, and were much surpris'd, that they should be charged with so high a crime, as that of despising the name of God, that
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is indeed, God himself; they were so secure, they were so confident, that they were not guilty of this crime, that they are willing to come to trial, they plead not guilty to the indictment, they debate and expostulate with God himself, and demand the proof of the charge against them, *wherein have we despised thy name?* But what's the answer which God returns? how doth he justify the charge against them? *ye offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, and yet ye say, wherein have we polluted thee?* Is there not a Law which forbids you to offer any unclean or polluted thing upon mine Altar? do ye not know that there is such a Law? and do you not then despise my name, while you wilfully violate that Law, which you your selves know to be mine? Thus doth God make good his charge against these persons, who wilfully sinned against his Laws; and seeing the very same charge lies against every wilful sinner, therefore is every wilful sin a flat contradiction to that *reverence* which every man owes unto his Maker.

But now although it be true indeed, that every deliberate and wilful sin be a contradiction to that *reverence*, which every

every man owes to the Lord of all; yet are there some particular kinds of wilful sin, that are more expressly so, than others. Some there are, that carry the very contempt of God clearly written upon the brow, some there are, that carry the marks of irreverence to him in more express and legible characters, although not all in the same degree.

I. The first and greatest of these sins, is the derision of all Religion, not only neglect, but explicate scorn even of the very worship of God in Prayers, and Praises, and thanksgivings, as well as of all other parts and instances of the duties he hath required from us. A thing St Peter himself foretold, 2 Ep. 3. 3, 4. *Knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming?* Where he describes such persons, as deny the coming of Christ to judgment, and then, in consequence of this error, scoff and despise all Religion: now what is Religion, but the homage we owe to our Sovereign Lord, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth? and what is it then to despise Religion, but to despise that ho-

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mage? and what is that, but a despight to God himself? the thing is evident beyond denial, and so is another besides that, which is; that it is not matter of wit to deride and to despise Religion; for if it be frenzy, it is not wit; and if it be not a real frenzy to despise the homage a man owes to God, and so to destroy and ruine himself, there is no frenzy in all the World.

2. But to proceed, another sin that carries a signal mark upon it of great irreverence towards God is drolling upon the holy Scriptures, irreverent use of the words and expressions therein used, the application of those expressions to trivial purposes and occasions, prophane allusions made unto them, and to be short, the using of any thing therein said for mirth, and sport, and entertainment. This is to play with Gods oracles, this is to jest upon Gods word, and so a reproach to God himself, and visibly betrays a very great irreverence to him. No man trifles, no man jests upon the words of a mortal man, turning them into sport and laughter, but in derision and slight of him; no man doubts, but that he that scoffs and derides his words, brings a contempt

tempt upon his person, and exposes him to the scorn of others. And so do they (so far at least as they are able) expose the Majesty of God himself, that abuse the words of the Holy Scriptures to entertain themselves, or others.

3. There is yet another sin behind, which I could willingly have omitted, if I could have tolerably satisfied my self, that it doth not carry a more than ordinary mark upon it of an irreverence towards God, though not so great as the two former; and that's habitual and constant swearing, and that without all provocation, in common and ordinary conversation, just contrary to that Law of Christ, *Matt. 5.34. I say unto you, swear not at all*, that is in ordinary communication, for so it follows, *v. 37. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* Cometh of evil? so doth every Overt act of sin; every such act flows from some sinful lust within: *for when lust hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* But it should seem, this sin of swearing in cool blood, and that in ordinary conversation, proceeds from some extraordinary evil. And what that is will ve-

ry easily be understood, if we consider that this sin hath no foundation in those appetites, that God hath planted in mans nature, either to preserve himself, or to propagate, and to continue his kind, as all indulgence to the body, all kinds of sensuality have; for this sin of common swearing hath no foundation in hunger, or thirst, or bodily pleasure, or in the desire of wealth or ease, nay I may add of power, and greatness. It is a sin without a temptation from without, nor doth it arise from any of those very inward appetites, that God hath planted in our natures: from whence it appears that it hath its rise from an unnatural kind of vanity, join'd with a very high irreverence towards God, who hath given an expresse Law against it, and that it is in its own nature a bold ostentation of that irreverence; for it is a calling God to witness in every trivial and slight affair, where a man would not dare to call a Prince, or a serious person to give his testimony.

I do confess that some persons may have been habituated to this vice, before they well understood themselves, or the nature of the vice it self. But why do they use no care to leave it? why
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do they not study to reform it, when they do, or may understand better? What will he do in compliance either with Gods command, or with his own eternal happiness, who will not labour to quit a vice, which is so expressly forbid by Christ, and to which he hath no greater temptation, than he hath to prophane and idle swearing? How can he hope to overcome the lusts and vices of Sensuality, which are nothing else but the abuse of natural desires and inclinations, and are by them suggested to him, and often excited by strong temptations from without? how can he hope to deny himself in point of wealth, and power, and honour, or to embrace death, or bonds rather than forfeit his integrity (which is most necessary to be done) who will not forsake a groundless sin, a sin without any natural appetite to suggest, and without a temptation to excite it? A small degree of fear and *reverence* to God Almighty would easily overcome this sin; which is an evident demonstration that it flows from great irreverence to him.

4. But to proceed to the last general; namely, the several considerations which may produce a singular *reverence*

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towards God; both in it self, and its effects, and restrain us from all contradictions to it.

1. Let us first consider the Spirit and quickness of the style, wherein God demands our *fear* and *honour*, wherein he requires our *reverence* to him. *If I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear?* which Language carries this sense in it. Do not you your selves require a singular love and fear from your relations, namely, from your children and servants, under the name of the same relations, whereupon I require the like from you? and, what is more, generally receive what you require? *For a son, saith he, honoureth his Father, and a servant his Master.* And had he not reason then to add, *If then I be a Father, where is mine honour, and if I be a Master, where is my fear.*

2. Now therefore secondly, let us consider how great a guilt we must contract, if we should deny that to God, to the Father of the whole Creation, and the Sovereign master of all the World, which every Father, every Master demands from his Children, and his Servants under the name of the same Relations, though the obligations thence arising

arising be infinitely greater as they stand between God and men, than between men among themselves. And yet notwithstanding all this, what Father is there amongst men, who will endure neglect and insolence, and disobedience in his Son? who will not reject, and disinherit, and utterly cast him off for it, if he do not repent, and humble himself, and return to the practice of his duty? Where is the Master, that patiently bears not only the neglect of service, but wilful injury in his Servant? Where is the Master that bears this without the greatest indignation against his servant for so doing? and that doth not judge his guilt so great, as to deserve the severest punishment? And therefore judge what guilt it is which every man draws upon himself by a wilful irreverence and disobedience to the great Father, and Lord of all.

3. And although it be very true indeed, that they, who bear the greatest load of guilt upon them, may not at present find themselves grieved and oppressed by the sense of it; yet ought it seriously to be considered, that God can in a single moment (such is his Sovereignty over the very spirit of man) awake that guilt into fear and dread in

the greatest Spirits in the World, awake it by an invisible dart, a secret arrow of his indignation shot immediately into the heart. And some such things he did in *David*, as plainly appears from his own words, *Psal.* 38. 1, 2. and following verses, *O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure: for thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presses me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. — I am troubled, and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* Thus was a Prince, and a man of War, who never feared the face of an Enemy, who had encountred, and slain a Giant in a single combate; who had killed two of the fiercest kinds of savage beasts, a Lyon, and a Bear with a naked arm, *1 Sam.* 17. 36. Thus was he dash'd and broken all to pieces by the sense of his guilt, and Gods displeasure, awakened by the hand of God.

4. Which teaches us further to consider, how grievous a burden guilt becomes, whensoever a lively sense thereof is moved and excited in the Soul. *The spirit of a man will bear his infirmity,*

mity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?
 Prov. 18. 14. While the spirit within is clear, and vigorous, it will support and sustain the Soul under every outward loss, or danger: but if the Spirit it self be broken either by the calamities of the World, or by the sense of its own guilt, what shall support and sustain it? But then it is here to be remembered, that although the calamities of this world may indeed break the spirits of men, yet that there is vast difference between the breaches made by them, and those that are made by their own guilt. These may seise upon the Soul, but they cannot seise upon the Conscience; those may enter the outmost trenches, but they cannot enter the Royal Fort: but guilt attaches and arrests the Conscience, makes a desolation there, where our chiefest support and comforts dwell; for it comes arm'd with Gods displeasures, and these are sharpned with such a force, as nothing is able to resist, the glorious Majesty, the Almighty power; the spotless purity, the Sovereign dominion of God himself. And hence that observation of David, *Psal. 39. 11. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest*

makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: where the original word that is rendered *beauty* signifies all that is *desirable*, all that is *pleasant* in any person; that is, not only noble stature, excellent shape, comely features, lively air, pure complexion, and the like; but gay humour, pleasant wit, fine address, mirth and briskness in entertainment, and whatsoever else it be, that may serve to render any one acceptable in common Society, and conversation. All which *beauty* presently withers, fades, and dies, as *David* here expressly tells us, under the sense of Gods displeasures, when he rebukes us for iniquity: *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*

What then remains, but that we reverence so great a God, who can stain the beauty, eclipse the Glory of all flesh with a single frown of his displeasure? and that we express that reverence in most sincere obedience to him? fear him, for he is your Sovereign Lord: fear him, for he is a mighty God. The Angels themselves so love God, as that they fear and reverence his Majesty. The Devils tremble under his displeasure,

sure, and the greatest persons cannot bear it, no flesh no spirit can endure it: It wasts the one, confounds the other, no creature is able to stand before it.

But after all, although the Majesty of God Almighty have a most astonishing glory in it, yet is the dread and terroure of it allayed and mitigated by his goodness; and therefore as he demands our fear, so doth he also require our love. And hath he not reason so to do? or do we want most powerful motives to excite, and kindle our love to him? He hath given us life, and breath, and being: he daily gives us all the supplies, and supports of life. We eat the fruits of his kindness to us, we wear the livery of his bounty, we lie down, and rise, we sleep, and awake, *live, and move, and have our being under the shelter of his providence.* And to proceed to higher things, he hath given his own Son for us. *And he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Rom. 8. 32. unless we deny them to ourselves, by refusing the terms, whereupon he gives them; What hath God
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by his prohibition denied to men none of the blessings of this life, none of the joys of that to come; he hath not forbidden us wealth, or power, or reputation, or peace, or pleasure in this World; much less denied us eternal happiness in the other. There is but one thing in all the World, which he hath denied us, and that is *sin*: and this very thing he hath refused us, because it is really hurtful to us. And although he hath not allowed us this, yet can he give us that very thing, that very happiness we seek in it (for this we seek in every thing) this he can give without our sin, and what is more, will give to them that truly love him, whatsoever is really good for them. He can give Wealth without Covetousness, he can give Power without Oppression, he can give Honour without Ambition, and pleasure of life without any stain, without any spot upon our innocence. He needs not our sin to make us happy, no nor do we need it neither to this purpose. The truest happiness in all the World is to love God, as our Lord commands, *with all the heart, and soul, and mind*: If we so love him, we shall

shall enjoy him, and shall be eternally
happy in him. Which he for the sake
of his only Son grant unto us.

Now to God the Father, &c.

The



The Fifteenth Sermon.

Matt. 5. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

IF you view the following parts of the Chapter, you shall find our Lord prescribing several rules of virtue, which were, at the least in some instances, far more perfect and exact, than those that were given in the Law of *Moses*, or by the *Prophets* succeeding him; and all of them stricter than those were, in the sense received amongst the Jews: which is the reason, why he opposes what he said, to what *had been said to them of old*.

Now because this seeming opposition between his precepts, and those of *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, might create a suspicion among the Jews, that he came to destroy the Law, and the *Prophets*,

phets, to contradict what they had said, and to offer violence to their Laws, he removes the occasion of that suspicion,

1. By a caution in these words, *think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets.*

2. By an exprefs declaration of the contrary, *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

The former I shall not insist upon, because whatsoever is contained in that, must be considered in the latter; for the better understanding whereof, it will be requisite to explain what is understood,

(1.) By the *Law and the Prophets.*

(2.) What by *destroying the Law, or the Prophets.*

(3.) And lastly, what by *fulfilling them.*

(1.) And for the first, although it be very true indeed, that the Son of God did not in any wise contradict either any history, or prediction contained in the Books of the Old Testament, but contrariwise confirmed whatsoever is there related, and accomplished what was foretold of him; yet I conceive that the *Law* is taken, in this place, for the

the Laws delivered in the Books of *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, for those rules of life which are contained in the other Books of the Old Testament, which were received amongst the Jews: and my reason is, because our Saviour in his following discourse in this Chapter takes no notice of matter of history or prediction, but only of matter of Law, and Precept.

(2.) And then further, as the *Law* and the *Prophets* signifie the precepts delivered in the Books of the Old Testament; so when our Lord assures his hearers, that he came not to destroy those precepts, his meaning is, that he did not come to thwart or oppose, or contradict them, or any thing which God designed in them, for so is the word *ἀνέν* taken in several places of the Scripture.

(3.) And lastly, when he further adds, that he came to *fulfil* those precepts; his sense necessarily must be this, that he came to advance and improve, or accomplish whatsoever God intended in them.

Having now sufficiently cleared the sense of the words before us, I shall proceed to shew the truth of the several

veral parts contained in them.

1. And first of all, of the *negative* part, *I am not come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets.*

2. And secondly of that which is *affirmative*, *But I am come to fulfil them.* In my discourse on both which parts, it will be convenient to consider the several kinds of Laws or Precepts given to the Jews, *Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial*, apart, or severally by themselves.

1. And to begin with the negative part, plain it is,

1. In the first place, That our Lord did no way contradict any moral precept of the Law, but left his followers under perpetual obligations to obey all precepts of that kind: *All things, saith he, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets, Matt. 7. 12.* Where we find him confirming that general rule, which the Law and Prophets had delivered touching our duty towards our neighbours, and consequently settling all particular acts of duty, which the moral Law required toward them, by the confirmation of that rule. The same is done as to our

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duties both to God, and man. *Matt.* 22. 37, 39. where he establishes and approves the two great commands of the Law, *that we love God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and that we love our neighbour as our selves;* whereunto he presently adds these words, *on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* These were the things which the Law and Prophets aimed at in all their precepts and exhortations; and these hath Christ confirmed and ratified, but no way prejudiced by the Gospel.

I say not now, how much more holy rules of life our Lord hath given in several cases, than were given by the *Law*, or *Prophets*; of that I shall give an account anon: all that I now observe unto you, is that an addition of higher precepts of obedience was no destruction, or violation of those that were not so high as they, but really an improvement of them; just as the growth of a child to a man is no destruction, but an improvement of the person; or as a greater degree of virtues includes, but doth not destroy the less: from whence I conclude, that although our Lord hath added perfecter rules of holiness,

liness, than the Law or the Prophets had delivered; yet he did not destroy them by so doing, but further improved what they designed.

But the great difficulty doth not lie in reconciling our Saviours words (*I came not to destroy the Law, or the Prophets*) with what he did as to the *moral* part of the Law, but with what befel its other branches, namely the *ceremonial*, and *judicial*, both which parts fell to the ground after his coming into the World, and what he did and suffered in it; and yet in truth he did not *destroy* either of them, in the sense, wherein *destruction* is taken in these words: that is to say, he did not oppose, or contradict them, or otherwise behave himself toward them, than was suitable to the mind and will of the Law-giver.

2. He did not violate, much less oppose any precept of the ceremonial Law, but caused the Law it self to cease, not by any opposition to it, but by removeing all occasion of any further use of it: as the Laws of war are not violated, but cease, and take no place in peace. He introduced that very thing, which the ceremonial Law designed, the introduced the life and substance

of those things, which were foreshadowed in that Law : and so he made it cease and vanish, not by opposing or contradicting, but by accomplishing the end of it, as it will further appear to you, when I shall shew *how he fulfilled it.*

3. Nor lastly did our Lord destroy, that is, violate or contradict the judicial part of *Moses* his Law, namely, the Law of the Jewish State, for that Law fell of it self in the Jewish Commonwealth ; when the City of *Jerusalem* was destroyed, when the generality of the people were carried away into captivity, when the whole Government was dissolved, and the Country became a Roman Province, there was an end of that Commonwealth, and so an end of those Laws, whereby that Commonwealth was governed. For the Laws of the Jewish Commonwealth were not given, save only to the people of the Jews, nor were they designed to continue longer, than the Commonwealth it self continued ; so that when this was once dissolved, those also fell of their own accord, without any violation offered unto them by our Saviour : from all which several considerations it plainly appears,

appears, that he did not come to destroy, or oppose the *Law*, or the *Prophets*, or any precept contained in them, and that he did not behave himself to either of them, as one that came to oppose or thwart them. So careful was he to give no scandal, to create no real offence to the Jews by contradicting in any precepts, *moral*, *cere- monial*, or *judicial*, which the *Law*, or the *Prophets* had established.

2. Having shewed the truth of the negative part of our Saviours words, which is, that he came not into the World to destroy either the *Law* or the *Prophets*; let us now proceed to give an account of the other part, wherein he affirms, that he came to *fulfil* them; that is, as I have before explained it, to improve, and accomplish what they contained, and what was mainly designed in them. And here proceeding in that method which I have used in the former part,

1. I first observe that our blessed Lord fulfilled the moral part of the *Law*, by giving stricter rules of holiness, than either *Moses* or the *Prophets* had formerly given unto the Jews, according to the received sense amongst the

best of their Interpreters, and, no doubt, in several cases, stricter than *Moses* himself design'd; and this is the sense wherein *S^t Chrysostom* and *Tertullian*, and divers others of the ancient Christians, affirm our Saviour to have *fulfilled* the moral Law, as well as by personal obedience to it. They teach that he filled up those vacuities that *Moses* had left in moral duties (because the Jews were not able to bear them) by adding higher rules of holiness: for as he established the New Covenant upon better promises, than those the Old was built upon; so he gave sublimer and higher precepts, than those that were given in the Old. If the Law, and the Prophets forbid murder, murder committed by the hand, our Saviour stifled it in the heart; for he hath forbidden causeless anger: *I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment*, Matt. 5. 22. If *Moses* condemned adultery in the body, our Lord condemns the very impurity of the mind, and styles it the *adultery of the heart*; ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old, thou shalt not commit adultery, but *I say unto you that whosoever looketh on*
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a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, v. 27, 28. If the Law of Moses allowed divorce upon small disgusts and animosities, our blessed Lord doth not allow it, save only in the case of Adultery, which is the peculiar and proper breach of matrimonial obligation, v. 32. of the same Chapter. If the Law allowed a retaliation of evil for evil, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, our Lord hath forbidden us to *resist evil*, v. 39. that is to say, to revenge it; for not to resist the evil done us, is to give place to the wrath of our Enemy, and this is the same as not to avenge it; and so we learn from St Paul's words, *Rom. 12. 19. Dearly beloved avenge not your selves; but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.*

If the Law and the Prophets forbad perjury, our Lord hath forbidden all swearing in our common and ordinary conversation; *let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*, v. 37.

If the Law allowed to hate an Enemy, that is to say, any person of the seven Nations, whom God had devo-

ted to destruction, our blessed Lord hath commanded us to love our Enemies. *I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.* v. 44. of the same Chapter. Thus hath he fulfilled the moral Law, by filling up several vacuities that *Moses* was forced to leave in it, in condescension unto the Jews, and to the hardness of their hearts; and by adding higher rules of holiness, than the *Law* or the Prophets had delivered.

2. Now to proceed, in the second place, to the *ceremonial* part of the *Law*: this did our Lord fulfil likewise, and that also two several ways.

1. By personal obedience to it, and all the rights therein enjoyned, whereunto he freely became subject. He was *circumcised the eighth day*, according as that *Law* enjoyned; he was redeemed by a certain price being a Son, and a First-born; he observed the feasts prescribed in the *Law*, yea and that of the dedication also, although but of humane institution, as appears in the history of the Gospel; he did, and permitted to be done, in and upon his own Person,

Person, whatsoever it was that Law required: whence he is said to *have been made of a woman, made under the Law*; that is to say, subject to all its Rites, and Ceremonies, *Gal. 4. 4.*

2. But secondly there is another way, wherein our Lord *fulfilled* the ritual part of the *Law*, which was by accomplishing all those things, and introducing all those graces, which were typically figured, and shadowed in it. That *had a shadow of good things to come, and not the very Image of the things*: that is to say, not the things themselves, *Heb. 10. 1.* (and so is the word *effigies* taken by no worse an Author than *Tully* himself, *nos solidam et expressam effigiem virtutis nullam tenemus*;) but Christ introduced the very things, which were foreshadowed in that *Law*. His Priesthood was antitype to that of *Aaron*; his Sacrifice to the Sacrifices of the *Law*; his entrance into heaven it self, *to appear in the presence of God for us*, to the High Priests entrance into the Holy of Holies on the solemn day of expiation; the expiation made by his Sacrifice, to that which was made by those of the *Law*; the spiritual purity of the Gospel to the legal washings, and purification,
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and abstinences from things then impure, the eternal rest, that he hath prepared for the people of God to the Jewish Sabbaths, and new moons; all which things were only *shadows of things to come*: and so the Apostle himself assures us, *Col. 2. 16, 17. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ*; that is to say, Christ introduced the things themselves, which were but shadowed in the Law by typical figures, and similitudes: which is likewise the meaning of these words, *John 1. 17. The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*; he brought in the very life and substance of what was but pictured in the Law: and thus he fulfilled the ritual part of *Moses his Law*, as well as *personal obedience to it*.

3. Now for the judicial part of the Law, whereby the Jewish State was governed, I need not say, how our Lord fulfilled it by submitting himself both to the Roman and Jewish Magistrate. He was contented to pay tribute, he suffered himself to be apprehended by the Officers

ers sent to this purpose, he suffered himself to be tried and sentenced, and yielded himself to the Execution of the sentence unjustly passed upon him; and though he could not owne the guilt, yet did he quietly receive the punishment; *for he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth,* Isa. 53. 7.

But the way whereby he did more especially fulfil the judicial Law of Moses, was by introducing the royal Law of universal love, and kindness; which, if observed, would more effectually attain the end of humane Laws, than all the wisdom, force, or power, which can accompany and attend them.

The end of all political Laws is only the safety and the prosperity of the Common-wealth, that men may live in mutual peace, that every man may possess and enjoy his life, and estate, and reputation, and whatsoever belongs unto him, without the trouble of fraud, or violence from other persons; all which ends would more successfully be attained by the Law of universal love, peculiarly settled by our Lord, than by the wisest of humane Laws, and the
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strictest execution of them; those can but bind the outward man, they cannot change the hearts of men; those can but tie the hands of violence, and muzzle the mouth of the wild beast; they cannot alter and mend his nature, nor make him further abstain from injury, than the fear of punishment and revenge may put a restraint and awe upon him: whereas the mutual love and kindness, that Christ hath commanded amongst men, and also recommended to us by the highest and most effectual motives, would not only restrain the outward actions of fraud, and injury, and oppression, but kill the very lust within, wither the very root of bitterness, and render every man easie and helpful to his neighbour, instead of being injurious to him; and this is suggested by *S^t Paul Rom. 13. 8. 9. 10.* *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self: love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore*
love

love is the fulfilling of the Law. Love thoroughly accomplishes all those ends, which were indeed designed by the *Law*, whence it is said, That the *Law is not made for a righteous man*, a man animated and inspired by a living *Law* of love within, *but for the lawless and disobedient*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. And thus hath our Lord fulfilled the *judicial Law* of *Moses*, as well as the *moral* and *ceremonial*, by the most efficacious ways and methods of setting such a *Law* within us, as would most effectually work and propagate the great design of the *Law* of *Moses*, which was added, as the Apostle speaks, *because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*

Having thus cleared both the parts of the words before us, it now remains that we reflect upon what hath been said, and draw some Observations from it.

First, And first of all, since our Lord came not to *destroy*, but to *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*, hence we learn, That Christianity, that the righteousness and holiness of the Gospel was the thing that God had in his eye, the thing that he purposed and intended, and that lay at the bottom of his counsels, in the whole
Mosaical

Mosaical Dispensation, as well in all the external Rites, as the other parts of *Moses's Law*.

God never had any delight or pleasure in the flesh or blood of Bulls and Goats, or any Sacrifices of the Law; he was never pleased with ritual washings or expiations, as things excellent in themselves; nor did he institute these Rites for any complacence he took in them, but *partly*, as the Ancients observe, to typifie things that were to come, namely, the mysteries of the Gospel; and *partly* to retain the Jews, accustomed to such like Rites in *Egypt*, in the worship and service of himself, the only true and living God; lest being denied their former Rites in the worship of the true God, they should have used them unto *Idols*, and to have continued in that apostasie, whereinto themselves and the world were fallen at the delivery of the Law.

Had there been no such Reasons as these for the Rites enjoined in *Moses's Law*, they had never been instituted or commanded, nor had God any respect for them, any regard to the most zealous performance of them, when divided from the essential parts, the great Fundamentals

amentals of Religion, judgment and mercy, and the love of God.

Hence those words of the Prophet Jeremy. chap. 6. 20. *To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba? and the sweet Cane from a far Country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your Sacrifices sweet unto me.* And those of Isaiah, chap. 1. 11, 12. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats.* Adde hereunto those excellent words of the Prophet Micah, chap. 6. vers. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? No, He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* These were the things which he accepted, nay these were the things

things which he designed in the very Ceremonies of the Law, and in all its symbolical Types and Figures. And these are the things which Christ our Lord came to propagate and promote in all he did and suffered for us. So constant hath God been to himself, and to the advancement of real goodness amongst men in all the Ages of the World, before, and under, and after the Law. He still designed the same thing, he had still the same end in his eye, namely, that we should *love him with all our hearts, and love our Neighbour as our selves*: on these, as our Saviour himself tells us, *hanged all the Law and the Prophets*. And the end for which our Lord himself came into the World was more effectually to promote what the Law of Moses had designed; and so the Apostle himself assures us, *Rom. 8. 3, 4. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Secondly, What then remains in the last

last place, but that since our Lord came into the World, not to *destroy*, but to *fulfil* the *Law* and the *Prophets*, since he hath fulfilled them by introducing that Religion which God always had in his eye in all the Shadows of the Law, a Religion suitable unto reason, a Religion that perfects humane nature, a Religion free and disentangled from the load of Mosaical Rites and Ceremonies, a Religion aiming at nothing more than hearty love to God and our Neighbour, and peace and happiness both in this and the other world : what now remains, but that we freely embrace and practise a Religion thus recommended to us, neither reproaching it by our lusts, by foul and sensual inclinations ; nor yet abusing and obscuring it by vain and useless superstitions.

It is a reasonable and manly service that God is pleased to require from us, it is the cure of all our maladies, it is medicine unto all our distempers, it is health and soundness to all our powers. It is not sacrifice and oblations, it is not *circumcision* nor *uncircumcision*, it is not what is hard and burthensome, but what is useful and good for us, 'tis *righteousness*, *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*.

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So that had we no other demonstration of the infinite love of God to us, this were sufficient proof of it, that he hath made our Religion our happiness. For in *Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature*; that is, the renovation of our minds by a sincere faith and love. And as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

The



The Sixteenth Sermon.

Pſalm 119. 59, 60.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.

THE *ways* of a man being in the language of holy Scripture, all thoſe actions and omiſſions, thoſe words and thoughts and inclinations which ought to be governed by Gods Laws, here ſtyled his *testimonies* and *commandments*; there is no doubt but that theſe are the things which *David* here ſtyles his *ways*. Nor need we queſtion what kind of thoughts he employed upon them: for the event it ſelf declares that they were ſerious conſiderations how far they accorded or diſagreed with Gods Commands, together with quick and ſtrong reſolutions to amend what he found amiſs in them; wherein he diſ-

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charged a great Duty, but such as is very much neglected, yea such as even he himself, as these very words themselves suggest, had for some time, at least, omitted. Some men are afraid to make a review of their own lives, as being sensible in the general, that they cannot account even to themselves for their irregularities and neglects. This is the reason why they dare not reflect upon themselves, but decline the test of their own Consciences, like men unwilling to come to Tryal in that Court, where Sentence is like to pass against them.

Others involve and intangle themselves in such a continual throng of business, and are so perplexed and overwhelmed with the cares and concerns of this life, that they allow themselves no time for recollection of themselves, and examination of their lives.

And some there are who spend their days in nothing but pleasures and diversions, in constant entertainments of fancy, which so possess their imaginations, that they leave no room for serious thoughts of the very concerns of this life, much less of that which is to come. Thus it comes to pass, that few
reform

reform their evil habits, namely, for want of recollection.

But did we call our selves to account, and make inquisition into our ways; did we impartially reflect upon them, and allow our Consciences to examine them, and judge by calm and sober reason, excluding the briberies of our lusts, and the fallacies which they put upon us; these thoughts, by the Grace of God assisting, might have the same success on us, that those of *David* had on him. And what that was, we understand from these words, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* In which words he represents these two things:

- I. The effect which the thoughts of his ways had upon him, which was the reformation of them, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*
- II. The shortness of the time wherein they wrought this effect, as it is expressed in the following Verse, *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

For the better improvement of which example in order to our own advantage,

tage, I shall follow the method of the words, and shew what it is that the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us as apt and proper,

1. To work the reformation of them; and,

2. To work it without delay.

1. And to the former of these Generals I refer the serious consideration of the vast number of our sins, with the many and great aggravations of them; the sad effects which these sins have had, or yet may have upon us; the vanity and emptiness of all those pleasures or advantages, which we have yet found in them, or can reasonably hope to find hereafter, to weigh against those evil effects; and the solid happiness of that state whereupon we enter, when we cast off and forsake our sins, and *turn our feet to Gods testimonies.*

These are the things which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us in order to the reformation of them.

First, The first whereof (that I may speak distinctly on them) is the vast number of our sins with the many and great aggravations of them, which we can never understand, much less reform, without impartial examination.

Sometimes

Sometimes we forget those very sins which we have committed against knowledge. Tract of time, decay of memory, multitude of business or diversion wear out the thoughts of those very sins which we our selves took notice of in former times, though now they be vanished from our remembrance.

Sometimes we take no notice at all of our sins and follies, while we actually engage in them. We think vainly, desire inordinately, speak rashly, censure unjustly, act indecently in the eyes of men, and sinfully in the eyes of God, not considering what we do while we thus entertain and employ our selves. And this, no doubt, was *David's* reason, why he represents the sins of men as passing the reach of their understandings, *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, Psal. 19. 12.

And if we be often so far surprized as not to observe the motions of our own minds, (which we may feel within our selves) nor what we speak, what we act before the ears and eyes of others, we may easily judge we are much more faulty in our omissions and neglects, which are less sensible and observed both

by our selves and other persons. For sinful actions cry aloud in the scandals they bring upon Religion, and sensible injuries to our Neighbour, while mere omissions are dumb and silent, and make no noise or stir in the World.

And yet there are some other things which we observe as little as our omissions, namely, the circumstances and aggravations of our sins; which are sometimes wilful and deliberate, sometimes against our former vows and resolutions of reformation; sometimes against severe corrections, or kind and fatherly castigations; sometimes pernicious to other persons, as well as hurtful to our selves; often habitual and long continued, and always against the mercies of God, *in whom we live, and move, and have our beings*, even while we continue to sin against him. Which aggravations of our sins make little impression upon our minds, much less urge us to reformation; till we seriously recollect our selves, and impartially reflect upon our ways.

But did we so reflect upon them, did we consider how oft we have wilfully done amiss, and that both against God and men, and how much oftner done the like through

through ignorance, error and infirmity, did we consider our many neglects in the Duties immediately respecting God, while we have omitted, or ill performed them ; adding hereto our great omissions towards our Neighbour, while we have neglected to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to support the weak, to assist the injured and oppressed ; might not these thoughts by the Grace of God so represent our sins to us, as that we should judge it most unreasonable still to persist and proceed in them ? Could we think it tolerable to add more evil to that heap, which is so vastly great already, and to encrease a heavy burthen by further accumulations to it ?

Methinks the remembrance of that time which we have mispent, to the great offence of Almighty God, to no true advantage to our selves, should perswade the redemption of time to come by a singular diligence in obedience. Sure I am, that this is the Argument St Peter uses to this purpose, 1 Pet. 4. 3. *The time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings,*

ings, and abominable idolatries. It is enough, and far too much, to have spent a day, an hour, a minute, much more a considerable part of life in service and slavery to our lusts. Nor should we remember we have so done, but with sad thoughts for having done it. These thoughts are so proper to the remembrance of such miscarriages, that God himself seems to represent them as the natural effects and issues of them. For thus he speaks to the people of the Jews, Ezek. 36. 31. *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings, that were not good; and shall loath your selves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* So black and deformed is that shape, wherein men appear unto themselves upon a review of their many sins, that then they abhor their own image, much more the sins that have deformed them. And this is the first of those motives which the thoughts of their ways may suggest to men in order to the reformation of them; namely, the number of their sins, with the many and great aggravations of them.

Secondly, The next to this is the ill effects which those sins have had, or yet may

may have upon them in the very concerns of this world, as well as of that which is to come. And for the demonstration of the former, I might appeal to the crazy Bodies, the feeble Limbs, the decayed senses of vicious persons, occasioned wholly by their vices; I might appeal to their broken fortunes, pitiful shifts, and mean devices, to gain the very supports of life: which are so evident in experience, that Christ himself represents the miseries which sin produces in mens souls, by those wherewith it destroys their bodies, and their prosperities in this world. This he doth in the Parable of a younger Son, *Luke 15.* who having requested of his Father, that he would give him the portion of goods that fell to him; and being gratified in this request, not many days after gathers all he had together, and takes a journey into a far Countrey, and wasts his substance in riotous living: having done this, and a mighty Famine arising in the Land, he then began to be in want, and is presently forced to adjoin himself, that is indeed, to sell himself, unto a Citizen of that Countrey, who sent him into the Fields to feed Swine, but, it should seem, so ill provided, that
when

when he would fain have filled his belly with the very husks which the Swine did eat, he found not enough of them to do it, and so was ready to perish for hunger. Observe what a Train of ill effects his pride and vanity drew upon him; it made him riotous and luxurious, his luxury brought him into want. being in want he is constrained to sell his liberty, and part with himself to another person. Being thus enslaved, he is thrust into a base employment, and made not only a Keeper of Swine, but like to one of the Herd it self, being forced to eat as they did, and yet still so pinch'd and straiten'd that he found not enough to fill his Belly. A very true and lively Image of men abandoned to vice and folly, who by indulgence to their lusts lose that very ease and liberty, that satisfaction and pleasure of life, which they endeavour to find in it.

But to leave this Parable at the present, and to proceed a step further, I must not omit to put you in mind of the many remorses and regrets which always attend the first beginnings, if not the intire course and progress of Apostasie from the ways of Vertue. For
God

God hath been, and still is so faithful to us both in the frame of our own natures, and the suggestions of his spirit, that both these put many checks upon us in our first adventures upon evil: and although mens consciences lose their edge, and the spirit of God withdraw from them, after long continuance in their sins; yet is their condition much the worse for these effects, though less uneasie at the present. For there is no man but thinks it better to be readily capable of a cure, although by the very sharpest remedies, than to die of a stupid and dull disease. Besides it must not be omitted that the ease that's gain'd by being delivered from the rebukes and reproofs of Conscience, is far overballanced by a loss, which cannot be divided from it, namely, the loss of the joys of innocence, and of the sense of Gods Favour, and hope of a blessed immortality: which howsoever undervalued, where they are not felt nor well considered, are styled *unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

All this while I have said nothing of that effect of a vicious life, which of all others is most dreadful, and most certain,

certain, if not prevented by repentance, that is to say, *eternal death*; nor shall I venture my mean abilities to represent so great a thing, but rather leave it to be considered in its descriptions in the Scriptures, and more particularly in that we read, *Mark 8. 36. 37. What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Now since the recollection of our selves, and serious reflection upon our ways may first recal our sins to remembrance, and then suggest that all the evils before mentioned have been the effects of sin in others, and that we our selves have had the experience of some degrees of some of them; methinks the very same thoughts that put us in mind of all these things, should powerfully move us to retire out of all the ways of sin and vanity, and reduce us into the paths of wisdom.

Sure I am, this is no more than what our Saviour himself declares touching the forementioned Prodigal; who having by a luxurious life reduced himself to the utmost misery, at last returned unto himself, and, *when he was come unto himself, brake out into these expressi-*

expressions, *Luk. 15. 17, 18, 19.* How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants: observe the condition of those persons, who surrender themselves unto their lusts, and spend their days in vitious courses. They are as men besides themselves, bereft of their reason and understandings, so is this person represented. Observe further, that he no sooner came to himself, as being now chastised and subdued by the miseries, his sins had brought upon him, but he resolves to return again to his Father's house, to confess his sins, to implore pardon, to abase himself before his Father, and to submit to the meanest offices, wherein he employed his hired Servants. So much regret, and ingenuity, so much humility, and self-abasement so much sorrow for former sins, such effectual purposes of reformation for time to come, may the thoughts of our ways, by the grace of God, produce in us in, consideration of the miseries which

which attend a vitious course of life.

Thirdly, Especially seeing the same thoughts may also mind us of the vanity and emptiness of all those pleasures and enjoyments, in fond indulgence whereunto we expose our selves to the dangers and miseries before mentioned, which is the third of those particulars, which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us.

And here I shall not take the advantage either of repeating those miseries, or of shewing the meanness of such enjoyments (whether you call them profits, or pleasures) which the generality of men attain, or can reasonably hope to attain unto by all their wit, and power, and interest. I shall consider no allays, wherewith the want of wealth and power, or bodily health may dash the pleasures of this life; but I shall give them all the advantage that can be wished, considering them nakedly on themselves, and shewing that even thus considered they are yet utterly insufficient to give satisfaction to our Souls.

And for the proof of this particular I shall not entangle your understandings with subtle and curious speculations, but

but I shall exhibite it in a plain instance made in the great and glorious *Solomon*, whose wisdom and splendour were so great, that when our Saviour would give an account of his own wisdom, he found no fitter a way to do it than to prefer it before *Solomon's*, *Matth.* 12. 42. And when he would lively represent the glory of the Lilies of the Field, tells us that *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*, *Matth.* 6. 29.

He was a Prince of infinite wealth, his Herds and Flocks were so numerous that he offered *twenty thousand Oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand Sheep*, and all these for Peace-offerings, beside what he spent in Burnt-offerings, at the dedication of the Temple, *1 Kin.* 8. 63, 64.

The daily provision of his house were *ten fat Oxen* (namely such as were fed in their Stalls) *and twenty Oxen out of the Pastures, and an hundred Sheep, besides Harts, and Roe-bucks, and Fal-low Deer, and fatted Fowl*, *1 Kings* 4. 23.

The yearly income of his own Traffick, over and above what was imported by the Merchants, was *six hundred*

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threescore

threescore and six Talents of Gold, 2 Chron. 9. 14. And as for Silver, he made it so plentiful in Jerusalem, that it was nothing accounted of, ver. 20. of that Chapter, it was but as Stones in his days, as it follows in the 29th Verse.

His magnificence was equal to his wealth; for his Throne was of Ivory, covered with Gold, and its Footstool was of the same Metal, and so were all his drinking Vessels, and all the Vessels of the house, that stood in the Forest of Lebanon, and many of his very Shields and Targets, as you may see in the same Chapter, 2 Chron. 9.

His wisdom I have already mentioned, He spake three thousand Proverbs, and his Songs were a thousand and five. He spake of Trees from the Cedar-Tree that is in Lebanon, even to the Hyssop that springeth out of the Wall; he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowl, and of creeping things, and of Fishes, 1 Kings 4. 33. His economical skill was such, that when the Arabian Queen beheld the state and order of his Family, She was amazed and astonished at it, and had no spirit left in her, 2 Chron. 9. 4. From whence it appears, he had skill enough so to apply and use his wealth, as to create the highest

highest pleasures that any thing in this World can afford, by extracting the finest spirit of it.

Nor had he only skill sufficient so to do, but he wholly applyed himself to do it. *He sought in his heart, as himselfe tells us, to apply himself unto wine (yet still acquainting his heart with wisdom) Eccl.*

2. 3. He made great works, as it there follows, he builded Houses, planted Vineyards, made Gardens and Orchards, and planted Trees in them of all kinds of Fruits, and made Pools of Water to render them fruitful. He got him Men-Singers, and Women-Singers, and the delights of the Sons of men, as musical Instruments, and that of all sorts, *Eccl.*

2. And that you may see how liberal he was to other inclinations, he had seven hundred Wives, Princeesses, and beside them three hundred Concubines, who were as Wives, excepting only that they were not solemnly espoused and endowed. In short, he denied himself no pleasure that the World could possibly afford unto him: So he professes of himself, *Eccl. 2. 10. Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy.* Thus liberally did he indulge himself, and that

in the very Flower of his Age, while he had youth, and health, and strength, to taste and enjoy all the pleasures that wealth and power could minister to him, and these attended with admirable skill to use and employ them to that purpose.

All this while he had nothing to interrupt his pleasures, having perfect peace at home and abroad; no seditions amongst his own Subjects, no wars with any Neighbouring Princes, no nor any thing of envy or animosity, nothing but honour and admiration, and what might serve to encrease his pleasures, *For all the Kings of the Earth sought his presence, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart; and they brought every man his Present, Vessels of Silver, and Vessels of Gold, and Rayment, Harness, and Spices, Horses and Mules, at a rate year by year, 2 Chron. 9. 23, 24.*

Now what an account of the joys and pleasures of this World may we expect from a glorious King, flowing with wealth, abounding in honour, enjoying all the delights of the World, and that in the very flower of his time, and without any outward interruptions?

Would

Would it not seem extreamly strange, if he should not find his soul at ease, and in full content and satisfaction? Would it not seem much stranger still, if he should express a dissatisfaction and discontent in the midst of all these secular pleasures? Yet this very thing doth he express upon a serious review of them, for so he concludes his own relation of what he had done and enjoyed in the World, *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on all the labours that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, Eccles. 2. 11.*

See here the account that the wise and great and glorious *Solomon* gives of the glory of this World, which he pronounces to be no better than *vanity and vexation of spirit*, and that upon long and great experience. And let the consideration of this teach us the emptiness and insufficiency of all this world can afford to us. And this we could not fail to learn, did we often reflect upon our selves, and seriously meditate upon our ways, and consider how little of satisfaction arises even from lawful pleasures, and how much less from those of sin, which though they should not be imbit-

tered, yet cannot but be much abated by the very sin from whence they flow.

These thoughts would teach us to understand, That God hath formed and designed our souls for pleasures quite of another nature, for spiritual and immortal joys. For certainly he that hath been so liberal as to provide a proportionable food for all the Creatures below them, for the Fowls of the Air, for the Beasts of the Field, for all things creeping upon the Earth, and all things swimming in the Sea, hath not been so narrow to the souls of men, as not to provide such joys for them as may give them plentiful satisfaction. Which leads me to the fourth Particular, which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us in order to our reformation of them; which is,

Fourthly, The happiness of that state we enter upon when we cast off and forsake our sins, and turn our feet to *Gods testimonies*. Then are our sins remitted to us, wilful sins, as well as frailties; and sinful actions against Gods Laws, as well as omissions and neglects; and *blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man*

man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin, Psal 32. 1, 2.

Then we become the Children of God, then we become the special concernment of his Providence, then are we adopted into his Family, and to a title to an *inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us: For if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17.*

Then are we renewed in the Spirit of our minds, then born of God, and made Partakers of the Divine Nature, then do we pass from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from death to life. Then are we made meet to be Partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. Then delivered by God from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son. These, and such like, are the expressions whereby the Scriptures describe the repentance of a Sinner, and the happy change which it makes in him, a change so happy in it self, and of such concernment to him likewise, that it creates a joy in Heaven, and makes the Angels themselves rejoyce. For, saith our Lord, *there is joy in the presence of the*

Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, Luk. 15. 10. and before that at the 7th v. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance, no habitual change of life.

Suppose we then that recollection of our selves, and the consideration of our ways bring all the things, I have now mentioned, into our thoughts (and they are really apt to do it) suppose them fixed upon our minds by the cooperation of Gods Spirit (which he will not deny to them that ask it) might it not reasonably be expected, that these thoughts thus fixed upon us, should touch our Consciences, move our affections, and kindle good resolutions in us, and provoke us to greater care and diligence in the future Government of our lives? If we did fully convince our selves of the infinite hazards and inconveniences, that attend a vitious course of life, of the vanity and emptiness of all those things, for the sake whereof we expose our selves to all those hazards, of the peace and happiness of that State, whereunto we enter by true repentance, I perswade my self we could no more content our selves still to continue

tinue in our sins, than willingly chuse our own misery, which God hath made an impossible thing, and that out of very faithfulness to us. Nor could we answer it to our selves to deny our selves the great advantages, that attend the conversion of a sinner, did we represent them to our selves in serious thoughts and meditations. These thoughts assisted by that grace, which suggests them to us, would move us to chuse immortal happiness, and the joys that attend the firm and stable hopes of it, rather than the very highest pleasures, which the wildest and most extravagant minds can possibly fantasie to be in evil.

2. Having thus given a short account of several things, which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us in order to the reformation of them; which was the former of the two generals before propounded. I shall now proceed unto the second, where I am to shew what the like thoughts may offer to us to perswade us to do it without delay, as it appears they did in *David*, who having seriously thought on his ways, delayed not to keep Gods Commandments,

Where

Where in my way to more particular considerations, I cannot but note this in general, that evil is a most indefensible thing, no sooner considered, and understood, but presently rejected, and forsaken. *I thought on my ways,* says the Psalmist here, and what then? *and turned my feet unto thy testimonies, I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* No sooner did he consider his ways, and make a discovery of his sins, but he quickly retired and fled from them as from the brow of a dangerous precipice, where he durst not stand a moment longer. Sin will not abide a serious thought, it will not endure an impartial trial: It is an imposture, it is a cheat, it is a lie, and so is every temptation to it, confuted as soon as understood.

But the more particular meditations, which recommend a speedy repentance are the consideration of Gods design in all his patience towards sinners; serious reflection upon the uncertainty of our lives, in this so corruptible and frail a State; and likewise due consideration of the several difficulties, and inconveniences, that attend the delay of reformation.

I. There-

1. Therefore let it be well considered, what is the end of Gods patience; and whence it is that he doth not pursue and follow our sins with speedy and destructive punishments, but give us time and opportunity to recollect, and reform our lives. The reason of this is not that the high and lofty one takes no notice of things below, that he is indifferent to good and evil, and unconcern'd in the sins of men, and in what they do and suffer in the World. It is not, as those scoffers imagined, who walking after their own lusts, cavilled the delays of Gods judgments, and mock'd that patience, whereby they lived, saying, as St. Peter hath observed, 2 Ep. cap. 3. v. 4. *Where is the promise of his coming? for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; but as it follows, v. 9. Because God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, yea even those very persons themselves, that injure his patience, and long-suffering.*

In the mean time I cannot deny that there is some shadow of an objection against Gods providence in the World
to

to them that measure him by themselves, and judge of him by their own model. For that he should readily pardon our frailties, and long forbear our wilful sins; that he should continue those very mercies which men abuse, and turn into weapons of unrighteousness, feed the mouth that blasphemes his name, support the arm that works iniquity, preserve that very life and strength, which is spent and wasted to his dishonour, and patiently wait for a Sinners return, while the Sinner abuses that very patience to an encouragement to impenitence, is such an example of long-suffering as is no where found but in God only.

But I consider that Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, that *one day*, as St Peter affirms, *is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; that he hath appointed and fixed a day, wherein he will judge the World in righteousness, and therefore firmly still believe, that his patience to Sinners in the mean time designs their repentance and reformation, and that his mercies in Jesus Christ are so great, that he will pardon the hearty Penitent after the greatest provocations. And

And this is that which himself suggests *Iſai. 55. 7, 8, 9. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the righteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord; and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And leſt we ſhould diſbelieve this, aſa thing improbable for God to do, becauſe unuſual amongſt men, he preſently addes in the following words: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord: for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* From whence I conclude, That it is not indifference to good and evil, nor want of concernment for mankind, which cauſes God to delay puniſhment; but merely his patience and long-ſuffering, waiting for the Sinners return to him.

And may not the conſideration of this, when deeply fixed upon the mind, ſo powerfully affect the hearts of Sinners, as to urge them to ſpeedy reformation? May it not produce a great indignation againſt themſelves, to remember their many miſbehaviours, and alſo their long continuance in them, under all the patience of God towards them?

May

May not the thoughts of that patience (where there is any ingenuity left) provoke the hearts of men to gratitude, and gratitude unto speedy repentance? Could any man think it safe or reasonable still to trespass against that patience, which he had already long abused, and to provoke that very goodness which he had forfeited long ago, did he seriously reflect upon these things?

I hope there are few so void of sense of their own concerns, and of love and gratitude towards God, whom serious thoughts of their own evils under the patience of God towards them, would not move to speedy reformation. Saint *Paul*, I am sure, represents the contrary, as a despight to the mercies of God, and a dangerous cruelty to our selves in that severe exhortation, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Despiseest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness, and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: which is so clear a demonstration that the consideration of Gods patience, and of his ends and de-*
signs

signs in it, should perswade to speedy reformation, that it would be needless to add any more to this Argument.

Secondly, Proceed we therefore to the second thing, which cannot easily escape our thoughts, while we reflect upon our ways, and the effects and issues of them, which is the uncertainty of our lives in this state of frailty and mortality. Which is so clear and evident to us both from what we feel within our selves, daily decays of natural strength, and from what we see in many others, short life and sudden death, that there is nothing in all the world, no not the denial of a God, nor the making of one of the Trunk of a Tree, reproached in Scripture as a greater folly than a presumption of long life, and of ease, and joy and pleasure in it.

Observe how this is represented in the Parable of a certain rich man, who having had so plentiful and so large a Harvest, that he had not where to bestow his fruits, thus deliberates with himself, *Luke 12. 17, 18, 19. Verses, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my Barns, and build greater, and there will*
I bestow

I bestow all my fruits, and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But what's the next thing he hears from God? *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.* The sharpness and bitterness of which rebuke, joined with the sudden confutation of this mans promises made to himself, represents the folly, sin, and danger of the like presumptions in other men.

Let us therefore, while we consider our ways, the number and nature of our sins, with all their several aggravations, the ill effects that will attend them, unless prevented by repentance, the absolute necessity of this Duty for the prevention of those effects; let us, I say, together with these, consider the frailty of our lives, and in the consideration hereof never defer a necessary Duty to a time uncertain, to a day we may never live to see; and that not only because long life is a thing uncertain in itself, but because the expectation of it (especially being generally used as an encouragement to delay repentance) may very justly provoke God to blast it with sudden disappointment.

God

God doth not only hate the delay of reformation, grounded on presumption of long life, as a neglect of duty to him, but reproaches the very folly of it, styles him a fool who so presumed: which puts me in mind of that of *Solomon*, Ecclef. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest.*

Thirdly, But now because many men may purpose future amendment, although they neglect it at the present, and will believe that these purposes shall take effect, notwithstanding all that can be said to shew the uncertainty of this event, give me leave to add a third Particular, which the thoughts of our ways may suggest to us; where I shall grant what men presume, that is, that they will repent hereafter, and further yet, that all their sins shall be forgiven, and they intitled to life eternal upon repentance. But I must not grant what they imagine, that it is as well to retrieve a sin by true repentance for it, as to prevent the sin it self, that it is no loss in the mean time to have delayed their reformation.

It is a loss of precious time spent to the great dishonour of God, and no true advantage to the Sinner.

'Tis a loss of growth in wisdom and vertue, which might have improved to higher measures, if they had been earlier applied unto.

'Tis a loss of higher degrees of Glory, unless the time that hath been mispent be retrieved by a very singular diligence, and excellent improvement afterward.

'Tis the loss, perhaps, of the souls of others, who may have been misled and prejudiced by the worse part of a mans example, namely, by his sin and vanity, but not amended by the better, that is to say, his reformation. For no man can ever assure himself that the example of his repentance shall be as effectual to reform, as that of his sin was to mislead and corrupt his Neighbour.

Besides all this, the delay of repentance and newness of life renders the Duty far more irksome, and fills it with greater pangs and sorrows, and makes a mans birth a new life, like that of a Child overgrown in the Womb, infinitely grievous and full of trouble.

Moreover it gives very great occasion of such reflections, wherein a mans guilt recoyls

recoyls upon him in bitter remorse and regrets, even after repentance and reformation.

It gives advantage to the Devil (and he is very apt to take it) to upbraid the Conscience with sharp remembrances of former sins, although they be already pardoned.

It gives him advantage to raise many scruples, fears and doubts of the sincerity of a mans repentance, and of the acceptance it finds with God.

And, to say no more, late repentance is apt to leave the souls of men under many weaknesses and distempers, just like a recovery from an obstinate, long disease of Body, which though it be a recovery indeed, yet generally leaves it ever after under many infirmities and decays.

All these things may the thoughts of our ways offer to us, and these suggestions plainly shew us, That to continue in sin at present, with purpose to reform hereafter, is as if a man should wound himself out of presumption of a cure, or break a limb with purpose to have it set again, or throw himself into a sharp Feaver with resolution to use the methods for a recovery afterwards.

Seeing then the prevention of further sin by speedy amendment of our lives, is by many degrees better for us, than to retract it by repentance, and that although we were as certain we should repent, and amend hereafter, as we are sure we now design it; let the serious consideration of this, and of all I have said to the same purpose, dissuade the delay of reformation.

And because that frequent recollection is a thing so indispensably necessary to render the motives to repentance effectual upon our hearts and lives, let us often retire into our closets, and withdraw our selves from the noise and hurry both of business and diversion, and then diligently apply our minds to the consideration of our ways. Let us consider what they have been in former times, as well as what they are at present; let us call to mind our many omissions and neglects, our many frailties and infirmities, as well as chosen and wilful sins; let us remember how much we have suffered, or yet may possibly suffer by them for nothing of real satisfaction; let us weigh the differences of good and evil, and their different issues and effects; let us remember that all
these

these things, and many other, call loudly upon us to amend what we find amiss in our selves, and that the patience of God towards us, the uncertainty of our own lives, the great disadvantage of delay in a work of such concernment to us, press us to do it without delay.

And the God of all Grace and Mercy so assist our thoughts and Meditations by the operation of his Spirit, that they may succeed to the reformation of our sins, to the improvement of our Virtues, and to our eternal peace and happiness in the great day of the Lord Jesus;

To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all Glory, Honour and Praise now and for evermore,



The Seventeenth Sermon.

I John. 3. 7.

*Little children let no man deceive you,
he that doth righteousness, is righteous
even as he is righteous.*

THE Gospel had not been long preached unto the World, but there arose a sort of persons, who though they professed the name of Christ, yet lived quite contrary to his precepts. Such was the Sect of the *Nicolaitans*, who took occasion from certain words of *Nicolas* the Deacon (the sense whereof they did mistake) [see *Grot. & Hammond* ad Revel. 2. 6.] to indulge themselves in sensual lusts, and to live in filthiness and impurity; and hence it was, that this reflection is made upon them in the words of Christ to the Church of *Ephesus*. *This thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate*, Rev. 2. 6. Like unto these

these were those that are mentioned by St Peter, 2 Ep. 2. 18. *when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error.*

And by St Jude verse 8. of his Epistle, *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities; and afterward at the 10th v. what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*

These were the Gnosticks, a Sect of Libertines who, as Irenæus tells us (lib. 1.) *did practise all forbidden things without any modesty, shame or blushing, as believing it lawful so to do, and thinking themselves, nothing less acceptable unto God for so doing: which is the error which our Apostle obliquely touches in these words, Little children let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous: Little children, so he stiles those persons who were less knowing, or less stable in the true Doctrine of Christianity, so he stiles them cap. 2. 13. although he seems in another place, namely, cap. 2. 1. to give that title to all*

Christians; *Little children let no man deceive you*, that is to say, suffer not your selves to be deceived by them that tell you that you may be righteous in Gods account, and grateful and acceptable to him, although you do not *do righteousness*, that is, although your lives and actions be not habitually just and holy: for as Christ himself was righteous in the eyes of God, because he was really so in himself; so those only that *do righteousness*, that yield sincere and true obedience to Christs Laws, pass with God for righteous persons.

These things explained, I shall observe these two things from the words before us.

1. That men may imagine themselves to be righteous persons in Gods eyes, to be in grace and favour with him, though they live impure and unrighteous lives; although they do not *do righteousness*, else this caution had been useless. So it had been, had it been a caution against an error, that no man could have fallen into.

2. That this Imagination is a very great and dangerous error; so do the words themselves suggest: *He that doth righteousness*, that is, he, and be only that

that *is* righteous even as Christ *is* righteous: not that any man can be so in the same degree with Christ himself, nor by his own desert and merit, gain the favour and grace of God, but that there is no way to gain it without being really just and righteous, as Christ was perfectly and fully so.

First. I begin with the first, which is, that men imagine themselves to be righteous persons in Gods account, to be in grace and favour with him, though they live in habitual disobedience to the Laws and precepts of the Gospel. In the prosecution of which point,

1. I shall first prove that this may be so.

2. And then secondly give some account of the rise or occasions of this error.

3. And lastly reflect upon the whole by way of inference or application.

And for the first, that there may be such an error as this, which I have now mentioned to you, plainly appears from matter of fact; and matter of fact plainly appears,

1. From the open profession of some,

2. And

2. And secondly from the lives of others.

1. There are some, who openly profess that there is nothing required from us to recommend us to Gods favour, no condition on our parts to gain acceptance and grace with him.

They own no Covenant between God and us, but only one between God and Christ. This, say they, Christ hath performed, and so reconciled us unto God without the performance of any condition on our parts [see *Salm. Flowings* &c. p. 152.] wherein they palpably contradict the whole strain and tenour of the Gospel, all its commands, threats, and promises, as well as the vow made in Baptism, whereby we enter into a Covenant with God himself, and promise sincere obedience to him.

These are they, who are commonly styled the *Antinomians*; which was a Sect once very numerous in this Nation, but is now become either less numerous, or more silent; and therefore I shall not at this time make any longer stay upon them:

2. But proceed to those, who though they do not in words profess, that men may be in favour with God, and duly hope

hope for life eternal, though they live in habitual contradiction to the Laws and precepts of Christianity, yet live as men who so believe, and consequently may be duly judged to cherish such a belief as this; and of these there are divers and several sorts.

1. Those who profess, or not deny the Christian faith, but have no care, no concernment for Religion in any instance of their lives, live as though there was no such thing, in all contradiction to its Laws. Such there were in St Paul's days, as you may see, *Phil. 3. 18. Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.* Yet these very persons professed themselves to be Christs Disciples and to believe the Christian Faith.

As they did, so do many in our days: They profess to believe in Jesus Christ, they profess the hope of life eternal declared and promised in the Gospel; and yet they live in habitual and wilful disobedience to the holy precepts and institutions, which the same Gospel hath prescribed.

Now

Now how can these things consist together? how can they possibly be reconciled, unless these persons judge themselves in Gods favour, though they live in such disobedience to him? could men neglect all the Laws, all the precepts of the Gospel? could they promise themselves the remission of sin, and eternal life, while they continue in this neglect, did they not judge that they might gain remission of sin, and the favour of God, notwithstanding the wickedness of their lives, or else at least not judge the contrary?

They do profess, as I said before, the hope of Salvation, Salvation promis'd in the Gospel, they give no signs of doubt or fear of falling short of so great a happiness, they pass their days in ease and pleasure, they enjoy the world, they enjoy themselves in the midst of prophaneness and impiety; which shews they have, in their own thoughts, reconciled the hopes of future happiness, with the present enjoyment of their sins.

2. Another sort there is, who though they seem to have some concernment for Religion, yet wholly neglect the practice of it: They spend their time
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either in speculation of things remote from life and practice, or in meer dispute about the things that relate to practice; in the mean time their own lives are little better than theirs who neglect all Religion. They are not more careful of truth, and justice, of mercy and charity in their lives, than other persons; the same temptations that sway the affections, and vitiate the lives of other men, do also sway and vitiate theirs: they love the wealth, and power, and honour, all the pleasures, all the advantages of the World, as much as they, who love them most; nor do they forbear to use any of the same methods, the same forbidden arts and ways to attain their ends, that are used by the common sort of persons.

They please themselves in the speculation of useless notions, or spend their zeal in meer disputes, or the censure of the lives of others, but take no care to reform themselves; yet all this while believe extremely well of themselves: assure themselves of Gods favour, and of his singular love to them, which shews they presume upon his favour, though they continue in their sins.

3. There are some other persons,
who

who proceed indeed a step further, but not so far as a Christian life; who yet fully assure themselves of being righteous in Gods account, and of eternal life and happiness. These are they who confess their sins, and possibly with bitter lamentations, and with great accusations of themselves, (as in truth we have all reasons to do) but when they have done, take no care to amend and reform those very sins, which they confess with so much passion, and such invectives against themselves. Or if they proceed a little further, it is but to some ineffectual purposes, faint resolutions of reformation, which never come to effect or issue. They take the design for the thing it self, the resolution of reformation for the very repentance God requires. The former of these, namely, the resolution of reformation, they look upon as a clear evidence that they have the Grace of God in them, and therefore are in favour with him. But then the latter, namely, the breach of their resolutions, and the continuance in their sins, they look upon as a humane frailty, common to the Saints with other persons, common both to the good and evil. But whatsoever men may judge
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in favour of their own corruptions, I am obliged to put you in mind of that which I hope you know already, That it is not the mere intent and purpose of the reformation of wilful sins, of an habitual course in evil, but the true and real reformation of it, that recommends us to Gods favour. So *S^t Paul* himself assures us, who having mentioned the several sins that are common in the lives of men, concludes his Discourse with these words, *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience,* Ephes. 5. 6.

4. To make one step further, Others there are who do indeed practise some real parts of Religion, but then wholly neglect others. They hear, they pray, they seem to be zealous in these things, and possibly in some others too; but yet still live in such sins as are inconsistent with Christianity, and the solid hopes of life eternal. They still live, some in impurity and sensuality, others in injustice and iniquity, others in envy and ambition, others in pride and scorn, and malice; so that no mans good name and reputation, no mans life how blameless and innocent soever, is safe from their unrighteous

teous censures ; yet all this while they are so far from thinking this to be any sin, that they make a piece of Religion of it, and believe themselves to be so much better, by how much they censure others.

5. Lastly, There are some other persons who make a commutation with God in doing the things he hath not required, instead of those which he hath commanded. They impose some penances upon themselves, or practise those imposed by others instead of repentance and reformation ; they live by Laws of their own making, instead of those which God hath made ; or else they are most extremely diligent in the constant practice of one Duty, to make some recompence and satisfaction for the total omission of another ; their temperance shall excuse their injustice, or their justice their sensuality ; their zeal shall excuse their animosity, their very profession of Religion shall excuse the neglect of the practice of it ; yet all this while they judge themselves in the favour of God, and confidently hope for eternal happiness. From all which instances it appears how apt men are to imagine themselves to be righteous in the eyes of
God,

God to be grateful and acceptable to him; although they live in wilful and habitual neglect of the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel.

2. Having thus dispatched the first general, proceed we now unto the second, where I shall endeavour to give an account of the rise and occasion of this error.

3. And first of all there is no doubt but that the inordinate love of the World, and the sinful gains and pleasures of it, is an eminent and great cause why men abuse and flatter themselves with the vain hopes of Gods favour, and of the salvation promised by him, although they live and die in their sins.

This love it was, which did at first hinder the faith of Christianity, obstruct the belief and reception of it: and so our Saviour himself suggests, *John 7. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* Where he insinuates that those persons who were willing to obey the Gospel, provided they knew it be of God; to live by the rules and precepts of it, would easily yeild belief unto it, when it was duly propounded to them: and

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consequently that the great reason why men would not yield their belief to it, was because they would not yield obedience to the Laws therein prescribed unto them ; because they would not forsake those lusts which the Gospel commands us to forsake, *the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.* And as it was these inordinate lusts, that hindered the progress of Christian Faith, when it was first revealed and published ; so did the very same lusts first bring corruption and delusion into the Faith of those persons, that made profession of Christianity, and still continues to lead them into misbelief.

They will not part with their beloved lusts and pleasures, they will not forget their sinful gains, or what is easie, what is pleasing to flesh and blood: the forgoing these is by our Lord expressed, *by the plucking out of an eye, and by cutting of a right hand,* Matt. 5. 29, 30. whereby he declares the great unwillingness that is in men to deny their natural inclinations, though never so sinful and inordinate. On the other hand, as they are unwilling to deny their natural inclinations, so forgo
their

their inordinate lusts and appetites ; so are they likewise very unwilling to despair of eternal happiness under them, or of the favour of God to them, that's a black and stabbing thought, as the other is troublesome and ungrateful.

Now what is the issue, what is the effect of these two things put together? the issue is this, men presently study to find out arts how to reconcile the hopes of happiness with the enjoyment of their lusts ; and alas! there needs no great art, for a man to deceive and cheat himself, where he is willing to be deceived ; he easily steps into this hope, that his sins, though wilful and habitual, are nothing more than humane frailties, common to the good as well as evil ; that God will never impute them to him ; that he may firmly hope to be saved, though he never abandon and forsake them.

2. But then secondly, that which gives something of advantage to this error in some persons, is the comparing of the difficulty of subduing of their lusts, with the vast greatness of that loss which they suffer, who lose that glory and immortality, which is promised to us in the Gospel. They will

not imagine that such a loss should attend the neglect or non-performance of a thing so extremely hard and difficult; which error, differing from the rest, which I have before mentioned to you, seems to deserve some more notice, than what I have taken of the rest.

1. And first of all, those who make use of this argument to promise themselves eternal happiness, although they continue in their sins, ought to consider that that happiness, which God hath promised, being unspeakably great and glorious, deserves our labour, merits our study to attain it upon any terms whatsoever they be, howsoever difficult to flesh and blood, and to our natural inclinations. The greater it is, the greater the care, the greater diligence, the more of labour doth the attainment of it merit: and so our Saviour himself suggests when he compares the Kingdom of Heaven to *a pearl of such a price* and rate, as that the person who once saw it, *sold all he had for the purchase of it* (Matt. 13. 46.) esteeming nothing too dear or pretious to obtain a thing of infinite value, namely, the glory of Gods Kingdom.

2. Again it ought to be considered, that

that although the subduing of our lusts, and opposing our sinful inclinations, be troublesome unto flesh and blood; yet God hath promised his Grace and Spirit, promised a supernatural power to enable us to correct our natures. Hence that profession of *St Paul Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things thorough Christ which strengtheneth me*; hence that exhortation also, *Phil. 2. 12, 13. work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God, which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* From whence it appears, that God affords his assistance to us to enable us to attain the end, and perform the duties, we cannot attain, cannot perform by the power of nature.

3. Add hereunto, that being quickened, being assisted by the operation of Gods Spirit, that self-denial and mortification, that temperance, holiness, and humility, that resignation to Gods will, that mercy and charity unto men, (which was before hard and difficult) irksome and troublesome to our natures, is now made easie and pleasant unto us; that Yoke of Christ which we before judged to be pressing and uneasie, is now made light, and easie to us; so that the man,

who found the duties, found the graces of the Gospel contrary to his inclinations, now finds his affections and inclinations greatly reconciled unto them, and cannot now please himself in any evil, but finds it contrary to his nature, being altered by the grace of God: and this is that which St *John* suggests, *I Ep. 3. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; but his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God.* These things considered, it is no wonder, that so great a loss, as that of glory and immortality, should attend the wilful violation of the duties prescribed in the Gospel, though they be difficult to flesh and blood. For though they be so, yet the reward promised to us is so great, that it deserves the undertaking of the greatest difficulties to attain it, and God hath promised his Spirit to us, to assist and help us in those difficulties; and the assistance of his Spirit makes our duties first possible, and afterwards easie to us.

3. The last occasion which I shall mention, that some men take to judge themselves to be righteous persons, to be in grace and favour with God, although they be Servants to corruption, is a false

false notion they have received of the imputation of Christs righteousness.

They fantasie that God looks upon them as having done what Christ did, and also suffered what he suffered; that is to say, both obeyed the Law, and made satisfaction for their sins: which is a very great mistake, representing God as judging of things otherwise than they are in themselves; as judging them to have done and suffered, what they have neither done nor suffered: which is to impute an error to him. The true notion of the imputation of Christs righteousness, is that God is pleased in consideration of that righteousness to pardon the sins, and accept the persons not of those that do not believe, or not sincerely obey the Gospel; but of those only, who do believe, and so obey it. God never intended that Christs righteousness should quit and deliver from our obligation to obedience, but that it should oblige us to it: *For he bare our sins in his own body upon the Tree, that we being dead unto sin should live unto righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24.

3. And now to reflect upon what I have said to the last general before propounded.

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1. Hence we learn, that the reason why the Gospel of Christ hath no greater success and efficacy in the reformation of the lives of those that make profession of it, is not any defect in it, but in those that make profession of it: it is not any defect in the Gospel, but wilful mistakes in the minds of men, that renders the Gospel unsuccessful in the reformation of their lives. The Gospel gives no ground at all for any to think themselves righteous, or hope for the pardon of their sins, who are not true and faithful penitents, who do not forsake their vicious courses. If men shall promise themselves pardon, while they continue in their sins, this is a promise of their own, it is no promise of the Gospel. The Gospel menaces death eternal to the impenitent and disobedient, and if men shall still believe the contrary, it is their error, their wilful error so to do; nor is it the Gospel that deceives them, but they deceive, and abuse themselves.

2. Lastly seeing it is so easie, for men to impose upon themselves, to judge themselves in favour with God while they continue in their sins, it will
very

very much concern us all duly to examine our selves, and make reflection upon our lives.

First let us very well consider, whether we do not indulge our selves in some sin, yet flatter our selves with hopes of pardon, though we continue in such indulgence thereunto, although we live and die in it. If we find our selves guilty of this, we labour under a great imposture, an imposture which, if not corrected, will rob us of our immortal Souls. It is hard for men of the truest principles to subdue their inordinate inclinations, to *enter in at that strait gate* which leads unto eternal happiness; but if the very principles of men, if the mind it self be possessed with error, and with an error of this nature, which promises life eternal to them, while they indulge themselves in evil; there is no hope, no expectation of reformation, till the error it self be quite removed.

Now therefore if thy life be vitious, if stained with any one sin, which thou indulgest in thy self, awake, and excite, and examine thy self, and see what it is that gives encouragement to that indulgence; and if thou be serious
with

with thy self, and search the bottom of thine heart, thou wilt find, it is one of these two things either a presumptious thy repentance and reformation sometimes hereafter, or a belief that thou mayest be saved, although thou continuest in thy sin without repentance, and amendment. The former of these is the greatest folly, the greatest impudence in the world; the latter the most destructive error: for certainly there is no such folly, no such imprudence in all the world, as to defer a necessary duty to a time uncertain, a time thou mayest never live to see; or if thou dost, mayest use as ill as that which is already past, that which is now present with thee. And then to believe a sin pardoned, while it is indulged, is such an error as doth not only open a gate to all sin, but shut the door to all repentance and reformation. Consider what I say, and the Lord give a right understanding in all things.

The



The Eighteenth Sermon.

1 John. 3. 7.

*Little children let no man deceive you,
he that doth righteousness, is righteous
even as he is righteous.*

FROM these words I have observed these two things, 1. That men may imagine themselves to be righteous in the eyes of God, to be in Grace and favour with him, although they do not do righteousness, but live in habitual disobedience to the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel. 2. That this imagination is a very great and dangerous error. The former I have already finished, and shall now speak unto the latter, that is to say, to the greatness and danger of the error. Where I consider, That for God to judge unrighteous persons otherwise than in truth they are, to accept their persons, and pardon their

their sins while they abide and persist in them, is contrary,

1. To his own nature ; and,

2. To the Gospel likewise.

1. This is contrary to Gods nature, that is to say, both,

First, To his wisdom ; and,

Secondly, To his holiness.

First, It is contrary to his wisdom. So it is, to judge of men otherwise than they are in themselves, to esteem them righteous, just and holy, while they are unrighteous and impure. It is the nature of true wisdom to judge all things according to truth ; this is its nature as it is found even in men, much more as it is found in God. He cannot erre or be deceived, even in the deepest, obscurest things, nothing is hidden from his eye, the night and the day, light and darkness are alike unto it ; he tries the reins, and searches the very hearts of men, discerns whatsoever is in them, and judges according to truth.

Now he that judges according to truth, must judge of things just as they are ; and therefore seeing the judgment of God is always true, hence it appears, They who are unjust and wicked, impure and unholy in themselves, are so in the

the judgment of God likewise, so in his esteem and account.

Secondly, If it be said, That although it be very true indeed that God cannot judge otherwise of men than according to what they are in themselves, not judge the Sinner to be righteous, the wicked to be pure and holy; yet that he may love and accept the wicked as much as if he were just and holy: the Answer is, That this is contrary to God's holiness. This doth as much thwart the purity, contradict the holiness of his nature, as the other contradicts his wisdom, as is often declared in the holy Scriptures. *God is of purer eyes, saith Habbakkuk, than to behold, that is to say, to approve evil.* He cannot look upon iniquity, *Hab. 1. 13.* So far is he from approving evil, or those that indulge themselves in it, that *their way is an abomination to him, Prov. 15. 9.* From whence it follows, That they who judge themselves or others to be in grace and favour with God, to be holy, just and righteous persons, who are not fully and really so, ascribe and impute that to God which is quite contrary to his nature.

If it be said, That God is said to *justify*

justify the ungodly, Rom. 4. 5. The meaning is, That he justifies those that have been so, not those that continue so to be; that he justifies and accepts the ungodly when they forsake and leave their sins, not while they still continue in them. And so we learn from the same Apostle, who having given a large Catalogue of sins and Sinners, concludes his Discourse with these words, 1 Cor. 6. 11. *Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. First washed and sanctified by Gods Spirit, and then justified and accepted.*

2. But then secondly, as it is contrary to Gods nature to justify and accept the wicked while they continue in their sins; so is it likewise greatly contrary to the Gospel:

First, Expressly, to the plainest and clearest parts of it. And,

Secondly, To the whole by evident consequence.

First, It is most expressly contrary to the plainest and clearest parts of it, to its most positive Declarations; such as those words of St. John are, which I do now insist upon, *Little Children, let no man*

man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous. He that is really and truly so, he is so, and he only in God's account. Like unto these are those of *S^t Paul*, *Ephes. 5. 6.* where having mentioned uncleanness, covetousness, and prophaneness; he presently addes this admonition, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience.* Whereunto we may add his expostulations, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.* *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Can there be plainer words than these? or can there be any thing more contradictory to the Gospel than what contradicts the plainest words and expressions of it? or a greater or more dangerous error than what so contradicts the Gospel?

The Gospel declares that the unclean shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, the Gospel pronounces the Drunkard likewise, declares the covetous and extortioner, while they continue in these sins, to be incapable of that Kingdom;
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this it declares in as plain words as can be written or expressed, and will these persons still presume of an interest in the favour of God, and of a title to his Kingdom? If they will, it is their folly so to do; it is a folly of that nature as doth not only expose them to the greatest danger, but shut the door to all possibility of escape, while they persist and continue in it. Such is the presumption of God's favour, of being reconciled unto him, while a man continues in his sins.

Secondly, And secondly, as this is expressly contrary to the clearest passages in the Gospel, so to the whole by evident consequence: To its commands and exhortations, to all the promises and threatnings of it; and what is more, to the very design of Christ's death, the very thing which men abuse into an indulgence to their sins.

To promise our selves the favour of God and acceptance with him while we continue in our sins, it is a presumption expressly contrary,

First, To the Precepts of the Gospel. These require and strictly charge us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present*

sent world, Tit. 2. 12. These require that we put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful lusts, that we be renewed in the spirit of our minds, that we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Ephes. 4. 22. and following Verses. In a word, the Laws of Christ require us to love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbour as our selves. Now is God serious in his Commands, or is he not? Is he in earnest, or doth he only amuse us with them? If he be not serious, if he not in good earnest with us in the Laws which he hath prescribed unto us, where is his wisdom? where his Majesty? where the perfection of his nature? Doth infinite wisdom trifle with us? doth he give us Laws without design that we should obey them? or accept of us without obedience? If he be serious and in earnest, then hath he given us his holy Laws with real purpose and design that we should yield obedience to them; nor can he chuse but be displeased, when we wilfully violate or neglect them; nor yet be reconciled unto us while he is so displeased with us, while we continue in disobedience.

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Now therefore for men to flatter themselves with hope of the favour and grace of God, hope of the pardon of their sins, while they continue in those sins, is nothing less by good consequence than to imagine that God hath given us his holy Laws without intending they should oblige us, that his wisdom doth but trifle with us ; which is an evident contradiction both to his Laws and wisdom also. Those are no Laws that do not oblige, nor is that wisdom which is not serious.

Secondly, Add hereunto in the second place, That a presumption on Gods favour in men continuing in their sins, is flatly contrary to all those pressing exhortations whereby we find our selves invited, nay vehemently pressed, unto obedience in numerous places of the Scriptures : such as that, *Prov. 1. 22, 23. How long will ye simple ones love simplicity, and the scorner delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge ? Turn ye at my reproof.* Such is that *Ezek. 18. 31, 32. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart and a new spirit.* Such is that *Dent. 5. 29. O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep my Commandments*

mandments always, that it might be well with them. Such is that used by St Paul, 2 Cor. 5. 20. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled unto God.

Now what shall we say to these and many such exhortations, wherein the Writers of the holy Scriptures, wherein God himself by them exhorts, invites and mightily perswades unto repentance and reformation, unto obedience to Gods Laws? Do not we see that they are most earnest, most serious applications to us; and can we imagine he would apply himself unto us with so much vehemence of address, so much strength and importunity, if he could be pleased and satisfied with us; if he would pardon and accept us without reformation of wilful sins, sins we cherish and indulge? Is all this importunity used to press and perswade a needless thing? a thing which is not absolutely necessary to recommend us to God's favour, to obtain grace and acceptance with him? Let no man have such thoughts of God, as to believe him so

importunate in pressing obedience to his Laws, had he not decreed to remit and pardon no mans sins, and to accept of no mans person, who lives in disobedience to them. The words, I have before cited, plainly shew he hath so decreed. For when he hath said, *O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them*; He clearly speaks his own Decree, namely, that it shall be well with no man who doth not fear him and keep his Precepts.

3. But then thirdly, What shall we say to the great promise of the Gospel, namely, that of pardon of sin, and life eternal? Is not this made to those only that believe and sincerely obey the Gospel? is it made to the wicked and disobedient? is it made to the cruel and unjust? is it made to the sensual and impure? is it made to any but those only who study obedience to our Lord, and to the Laws by him prescribed? Read and observe the whole Gospel, turn it over leaf by leaf, from the beginning unto the end, and see if you find any one passage promising pardon and remission, promising grace and favour with
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God to the impenitent and disobedient ; and is it not then a great presumption for the impenitent and disobedient to promise that to themselves which the Gospel hath no where promised to them ?

And yet again, what is the reason why God hath promised *eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality*, Rom. 2. 7. What is the reason why he hath promised remission of sins upon repentance, *Luke 24. 47.* but that the assured expectation of these so great rewards and mercies, might most effectually stir us up to the performance of our Duties ? and that we may clearly understand that there is no ground to hope the one without performance of the other ? Surely this is the reason of it ; and yet it were no reason at all, if the reward might be expected without the performance of the Duty.

Now therefore although we could imagine that God was not in earnest with us in the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, nor in the pressing exhortations which are annexed unto its Precepts (which yet would be an infinite folly ;) yet the exprefs and clear promise of par-

don of sins, and life eternal upon faith and obedience to the Gospel, evidently shews how real and serious God is with us, when he requires obedience from us. He would never have added so great a motive as the promise of glory and immortality to perswade obedience to his Laws, had it not been his real design that we should yield obedience to him, or forfeit his grace and favour to us.

4. But to pass on to the fourth Particular, there is nothing so flatly, so expressly contradicted by a presumption of Gods favour in men continuing in their sins, as the threats and menaces of the Gospel. For what is the thing these threats denounce? Nothing less than the wrath of God, nothing less than eternal misery, as the sure effect of that wrath; and who are the persons upon whom that wrath and this misery is denounced? are they not the impenitent and disobedient? are they not those who live in habitual disobedience to the holy Precepts of the Gospel? Hear the Apostle speak in the Case, *Rom. 2.8, 9. Unto them who are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and*

and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

And then that no disobedient person may deceive himself, as judging himself exempt or quit from the common doom of the disobedient, he further adds at the 11. verse: *There is no respect of persons with God.* He judges of all men as they are, nor doth admit of any excuse of wilful sin in any condition, or rank of men, more than in any other.

Now being God so plainly threatens death eternal unto the impenitent and disobedient, can there be any so great an error, as for these men to presume of pardon, and to expect eternal life, while they continue so to be? The Gospel denounces death upon them, they promise life unto themselves: and is not then this promise of theirs expressly contrary to the Gospel? The Gospel tells them that they must die, they say no, but we shall live, and do they not contradict the Gospel? The Gospel saith, that they are under Gods displeasure, but they presume they are in his favour; and where do you think lies the truth? in the Gospel, or in their presumptions? We must believe what the Gospel saith, whatsoever it be that they presume: and

so the Apostle himself believed when he put this truth upon record, 2 Cor. 5. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; for what doth he add to these words? *Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord we perswade men*; we labour to instruct the ignorant, we labour to convince the obstinate, we labour to awake the drowsy, we strive to stir up every person to escape from the wrath which is to come, by timely repentance and reformation; we *know the terrour of the Lord*, we do not guess, but we are assured, that it will overtake the impenitent, when he shall return to judge the World; and therefore use our utmost power to perswade repentance and reformation.

5. And now because that impenitent persons, even those that abide in wilful sin, are wont to ground their hopes of pardon and life eternal on the death of Christ, and the satisfaction made by him; it will he sit in the last place to shew that his death and satisfaction is so far from giving any countenance to this error, that it doth utterly overthrow it;
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nor need we any further argument to convince and perswade us that this is so, than that the death of our blessed Lord is always used in the holy Scripture as a mighty motive to obedience. For certainly that very same thing can be no motive unto obedience, that gives any just and true encouragement for a man to continue in his sins; yet so it is, the death of Christ is always represented in Scripture, as a mighty motive to obedience, unto all obedience to the Gospel, and so designed by Christ himself. *He gave himself for us*, says the Apostle, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. *He bare our sins in his own body upon the tree that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. *He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, that is, from the lusts and corruptions of it*, Gal. 1. 4. *He gave himself for his Church, or Body, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Eph. 5. 25. &c. And that you may

may see that he was really understood to design this in his dying for us, and that his death tends effectually to this purpose with them that understand it aright, hear what the Apostle himself speaks upon this point, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* From whence observe, that the death of Christ was so apprehended and understood by the primitive followers of our Lord, that they took their very greatest motives, their strongest arguments to obedience from it: so far was it from giving them any grounds, or reasons to cherish and indulge their sins. If any man ask what then hath the death of Christ done for the remission of our sins? My answer is, that the satisfaction thereby made, hath gained the pardon of all those sins we repent of, not of those whereof we do not repent. It operates to the remission of sin, of all degrees and kinds of sin, when we abandon and forsake them; not while we cherish and indulge them: and thus
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it becomes, not an encouragement to live in them, but to abandon and cast them off.

3. Having thus shewed, that for God to accept men in their sins, to pardon them while they live in them, is flatly contrary to his nature, contrary to his own decree declared and published in the Gospel, I may now very justly conclude the thing, which I propounded at the first, that a presumption of his pardon, while a man continues in his sins is a very great and dangerous error: for so of necessity must that be, which is so manifest a mistake both of the nature and will of God, and that in a matter of no less moment, than that of eternal life and happiness.

Add hereunto, that this is an error, which makes men stupid and secure in the midst of the very greatest dangers, lulls them asleep under Gods displeasures, charms them with the hope of peace, while it is far removed from them. They speak peace unto themselves, the Gospel speaks quite contrary; they judge themselves in Gods favour, the Gospel pronounces that they are not so; they promise themselves remission of sins, eternal happiness

pinels and Salvation, the Gospel threatens death and judgment. In the mean time having reconciled the hopes of Heaven to the fruition of their lusts, they enjoy themselves, they enjoy their sins without any fear of danger from them; for such is the nature of this error, that it infatuates the mind it self, removes the force and power of Conscience, lets the corruptions of nature loose, leaves no restraint, leaves no check at all upon them; and so exposes them to destruction, till it be discovered and removed.

3. I have said enough of the propositions which are implied in the words before us, namely, (1.) that men may presume of Gods favour while they continue in their sins: (2) That this presumption of theirs is a very great and dangerous error; and shall now conclude with what is expressed: *He that doth righteousness is righteous*; that is to say, he that is hearty and sincere in the practice of all the several duties prescribed unto us in the Gospel, he is acceptable unto God, he is in grace and favour with him; nor will God charge him with the guilt of such lapses and inadvertencies as flow from the frailty of humane nature. And what is the
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use we should make of this? It is to awake and excite our selves to all diligence, to all sincerity in our duties. And what are the motives, what the arguments to that diligence?

I. That which is mentioned in the Text, where we find, that this is the very thing that recommends us to Gods acceptance; *He that doth righteousness is righteous*, that is, he is so in Gods account, as well as really so in himself: *for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry*, Psal. 34. 15. They are as the apple of his eye, he hath a tender kindness for them, he bears a singular regard unto them, and takes an especial care of them. Righteousness is the Image of God, true goodness wheresoever it is, is a beam derived from the fountain of light, which God doth always love and cherish, always bless with especial favour; whatever regard or disregard, whatever favour or disfavour it finds with men, it never wants the favour of God; it is a participation of his Image, and he loves it wheresoever it is, as he loved it in his only Son: so the Apostle himself adds, *He that doth righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous.*

teous. And is not this a singular motive to live in the constant practice of it ? what is that that supports the minds, what is that that cheers the hearts and spirits of wise, and good, and holy men under all the troubles, all the calamities of the World, but the hope and sense of Gods favour ? where can we find a sure refuge, an assured shelter, and security under thousands of fears and disappointments that attend us in the present World, but under the shadow of Gods wings, the grace and favour of God Almighty ? which Grace is Almighty like himself, and will preserve to life eternal, if we labour faithfully to retain it by true and diligent obedience to him : let this therefore move us to obedience.

2. And lastly, because we have taken upon us the name and profession of Jesus Christ, and because that Christ hath strictly commanded *that every one that names his name, depart from iniquity*, lest he bring a scandal on that profession ; Let the honour of so dear a Master, the credit and service of his Church, which he hath purchased with his blood. perswade the obedience of the Gospel, If these, with other con-
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siderations tending unto the same purpose, have not this effect upon us, we shall bring a scandal upon the Gospel, we shall open the mouth of scorn and clamour against the Religion we profess, we shall give occasion for men to think, that we are under the great delusion, which the Apostle here corrects, of thinking our selves righteous persons, although we do not do righteousness. But in the diligent and careful practice of the holy Laws that Christ hath given us, we shall honour our Lord, adorn his Religion, edifie others, edifie our selves, grow to an excellent habit of mind. What shall I say more? In so doing we shall obtain all the blessings of the Gospel, and at last arrive at eternal happiness.

The



The Nineteenth Sermon.

Luk. 16. 8.

For the Children of this world are in their generation wiser than the Children of light.

THESE words are a short reflection made upon the behaviour of a certain Steward (as it is represented in a Parable) who, having imbezeld his Masters goods, is called to account for his miscariage, and thereupon to be displaced. *How is it saith his Lord to him, that I hear this of thee! give an account of thy Stewardship, for thou mayst be no longer Steward, v. 2. of this Chapter.* The Steward, surprized with the suddain notice of his removal from his place, presently begins to bethink himself how he shall now provide for himself. *He said with himself, v. 3. what shall I do? for my Lord taketh away from*

from me the Stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. But long it was not before he comes to a resolution, which was, to gratifie his Masters debtors in the abatement of their debts, that so when his Master had removed him, they might receive and entertain him: so it follows v. 4. *I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their houses*: accordingly calling them to reckon with him, he makes some abatement to every debtor of what was owing to his Lord: To him that owed him *an hundred measures of Oyl*, he makes abatement of one half: saying unto him, *take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty*, v. 6. To him that owed an hundred measures of wheat, he abated a fifth part of the debt: *Take thy bill and write fourscore*, v. 7. So he obliged his Masters debtors to entertain him in their houses, when he had lost his Stewards place; so he provided for himself. His Lord in the mean time knowing this as well as his other misbehaviours, though he could not approve the fraud and injustice of his Steward; yet commends the care he had of himself, commends the wisdom of his Servant in making

provision for the future: so it follows, *v. 8. And the Lord commended the unjust Steward because he had done wisely;* whereupon our Saviour adds this following observation: *For the Children of this world, are in their generation wiser than the Children of light.*

1. *The Children of this world* are those that mind and study the present World; that is, the concerns and profits of it, as the great and only valuable things, and have no other end at all, but to attain to wealth and power, and what may be useful in this life: for wheresoever the *World* is put for one particular sort of men, it always signifies the worse sort; so in those words, *John 17. 9. I pray for them, I pray not for the world:* and afterwards at the 16. *v. they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* From whence as from divers other places it hath been truly and well observed, that although the *World* do often signify all mankind, the good and evil both together, yet where it is put for one part only, it always designs the worse part.

2. Now to go on, *the Children of light* are those that profess the faith and hope of future Glory, and to make the attain-

attainment of that glory ~~their~~ chief endeavour ~~is~~ the World: so is the same expression taken, John 6. 36. *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the Children of the light*; and so the Apostle, 1 Thess. 5. 5. *ye are all the Children of the light, and the Children of the day*: that is to say, ye all profess the faith of the Gospel, which hath brought us out of darkness into light; ye all profess the stedfast hope of that Glory, which is promised in the Gospel to us, and to make the pursuit of that Glory the chief design and end of life. These are the persons whom the Scriptures style *the Children of light*, and this is the reason why they are so styled.

3. And then further whereas it is said, that the *Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of light*: the meaning is, that they pursue those ends and interests which they propound unto themselves, the advantages of this present World, with greater-prudence care and diligence, than those that profess the faith and hope of a better World, study and practise those means, that are proper for the gaining of it. This is the sense of the words before us,

and that which I shall insist upon, shewing how those that look no further than present things, are wiser in their affairs and interests, than those that profess the Faith and Hope of future happiness are in theirs. And this I shall shew,

1. In some circumstances which relate to the several ends, which these two different sorts of persons severally propound unto themselves.

2. And secondly in their different behaviour, as to the means to their several ends.

1. And for the former of these particulars.

1. Let it be considered in the first place, that they that are wise for the present World, fix and settle a certain end, that is, the advantages of this World, as a certain scope, a standing mark to direct and govern all their actions. They firmly resolve upon their end, and resolve never to vary from it upon any conditions whatsoever: Whereas now on the other hand, many of them that profess the Gospel never come to any such resolution, in the end which they ought to aim at in all their actions and endeavours; that is to say, eternal happiness revealed, and promised in the Gospel.

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Some there are that profess the Gospel, who never take this great end into any degree of consideration; never enter upon any deliberations, any counsels at all relating to it: but live by chance, live by occasion, chuse and refuse as occasion serves, never once taking into their thoughts any certain and stable end of life, much less the greatest end of all; everlasting life in the World to come.

Others there are, who do sometimes deliberate of the end of life, think with themselves for a little while, what they should make their principal end; and by these thoughts do in some measure incline themselves to prefer the future before the present, future glory and immortality before the vanities of this World: but never fix those inclinations upon their hearts, break off their thoughts and deliberations, before they come to a certain issue, so as that nothing shall divert them from it, not all the allurements of the World, nor all the dreads and dangers of it: And this is the reason of the instability of their lives, of their inconstancy in their actions, of their reeling and staggering to and fro between these present and future things.

They never fix eternal glory as the principal end and design of life, as those that design the present World, settle its profits and enjoyment, as the certain end and design of theirs.

Add hereunto, what is very strange, that they that make the World their end, are more regardful of the future, within their proper sphere and compass, than some that profess the faith and hope of future Glory. And this indeed is the very thing, which is commended in the Steward; that he considered what he should do, how he should provide for time to come, being now to lose the place he had. This is the instance wherein the Children of this World are said to be wiser in their Generation than the Children of light: a great reproach to infinite numbers, that profess the hopes of a blessed immortality, that they should be much less solicitous for everlasting and endless ages, than others for that little time (if any at all, for that's uncertain) which is future in the present World.

2. The Children of this World having once fixed and settled their end, concluded what the thing shall be, which they will make the main design and end
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of life, do always keep that end in view, always preserve it in their thoughts, live in the daily consideration, and constant contemplation of it. They have it in view in all their Counsels, their Counsels are directed by it. It is that Star they have in their eye in the whole progress and course of life, the thoughts of it never depart from them; they rather forget to eat, or drink, or take the rest which even nature itself requires, than that they have made the end of life, the advantages of the present World.

But how do they (or most of them) behave themselves that profess the hopes of eternal life? Is this life always in their thoughts? is future Glory and Immortality always present to their minds? do they live in the constant view of everlasting rest and happiness? Or do not the *cares*, do not *pleasures*, do not the smallest trifles of the World drive out the thoughts of future happiness, and turn them out of the way unto it? are they not (to use our Saviours words, *Luk. 8. 14.*) *choak'd with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life?* are they not so overwhelmed in them, as to forget God and themselves;

and their great end, who they are, what they have designed, what they have formerly fixed upon, as the principal end and design of life? And how much then do wordly men in their Generation, exceed the Children of light in wisdom: those keep their end in constant view, and constantly govern themselves by it; these suffer the thoughts of their chief end to vanish away from off their minds, suffer their passions from within, suffer temptations from without, to chase away all the thoughts of it.

2. Having thus compared the Children of this World with the Children of light in point of wisdom, as to some circumstances in their ends, and seen how much the wisdom of the one exceeds the wisdom of the other; let us now proceed to shew the like from the different behaviour severally used in the means to their several ends.

1. And first of all, the Children of this present World, who make this World their great end, do always duly and well consider what means are proper for their ends, and use an especial heed and diligence, not to be cheated, and deceived. The easiness of impro-
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bable means shall not recommend them to their practice; the difficulty of those that are true and certain shall not hinder the choice and use of them: They rather chuse to use much pains to good purpose, than never so little to none at all.

But they that profess the faith and hope of life eternal, do not so duly and well consider, what are the surest means unto it; many do not consider at all what these means and methods are, spend no thoughts at all upon them; but while they profess a certain end, plainly contradict their own profession by an utter neglect of all the means that should lead them to the attainment of it: nay live just contrary to their end, and use no other means for heaven, than those that lead them to destruction: so the Apostle, *Philip. 2. 18, 19. Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.* And then further many others study to find out easie ways to life eternal, and rather chuse to lose their end in the use
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of false and deceitful means, than to attain it by those endeavours, that seem more difficult, although they be more certain likewise.

If they can think of any method, whereby they may hope to gain a pardon, and yet notwithstanding retain their sin; if they can find out any arts to reconcile the hopes of heaven to the enjoyment of their lusts; if any such method offer it self, as promises everlasting happiness, and yet permits them in their sins, or admits a commutation for them, a penance instead of reformation, this is the method which they will chuse, this is a Religion they will embrace: so they chuse their own delusions, and study to cheat, and deceive themselves. Our Lord hath left this caution with us, as necessary for our eternal Salvation, *Matt. 5. 29, 30.* *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* And who would think but that such a caution should firmly settle this belief, that every reigning, that is, every

very habitual lust excludes a man from the Kingdom of Heaven? yet such is the folly of infinite numbers, who do profess the Gospel of Christ, that they do both permit their lusts to reign in them, and hope to attain to life eternal; they suffer themselves to be deluded with false and deceitful arts and shifts, pretending to be the way to heaven: but so do not they that make the World their great end, they chuse the means that are true and proper, although more difficult in Execution, than those that are not so effectual.

2. Add hereunto in the second place, that they who make this World their end, having once concluded of the means that are most proper, most effectual for this purpose, use no delay in Execution. They sleep not over their opportunities of serving their interest and advantage, they do not defer that till the morrow, which had been better done to day; but carefully improve every moment for the gaining of that they have designed. But Lord! what tedious delays are used by many professing Christianity, before they will seriously apply themselves to gain the end of that profession, or lead their lives according

ing to it? How many trifling arts are used to put off the practice of their duties, to secure their darling beloved lusts? What mean excuses are pretended to defend and justify their delays? How many resolutions are made, and broken? how many times are set, and put off for this great work, this necessary business of reformation? How many convictions must they suffer? How often must Conscience be awakened? what pangs and regrets must it endure? what flames must God kindle upon it, before they will seriously apply themselves to consider their end, and the way unto it, shake off their lusts, and practise the Duties of Christianity? See how our Lord represents this case, *Luk. 9.* at the latter end, where when he commands one to *follow* him, his answer is, *Lord suffer me first to go, and bury my Father.* Another receiving the like command presently returns a like answer: *I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house.* So we (even too too many of us) being urged to mind our great end, to secure our everlasting happiness, resolve indeed upon repentance, and reformation, but delay to practise our
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resolutions; this men put off so oft, so long, with such oppositions to their own reason, such contradiction to their Conscience, till at last they utterly lay aside the very design and purpose of it, and never think any more of it, unless perhaps the arrest of sickness, or the sense of approaching near to death, revive their former resolutions; and then the Minister is called for, then the Sacrament, then Absolution is desired, with what success God only knows, I will not undertake to say. However thus much I may pronounce, that the weakest and most imprudent persons, do not manage the affairs of this life with so little prudence and foresight, as these the concerns of life eternal.

3. As the Children of this World use no delays in the Execution of the means, which they judge most proper for their ends; so they are not heedless and incogitant, but strangely diligent in the execution: They do entirely give up themselves to serve the end which they have chosen: They mind, they pursue this one thing only; they do not halt between two opinions, but sacrifice every other thing for the service of their main design. They will
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deny their ease, and pleasure, they will deny their reputation, they will bridle their natural lusts and passions, they will do any violence to themselves, to attain the end they have propounded as the great design, and end of life. But how do they (many of them) behave themselves, who profess the hope of life eternal, and the attaining of that life to be their chief and principal end? do they submit all ends to this? do they consecrate all their labours to it? do they entirely yield themselves to the service of God, and their own Souls? do they not halt between *Christ* and *Belial*? is it no part of their design to serve any other end but one? do not God and Mammon divide their thoughts? hath not Mammon a share with God? is there no darling beloved lust that cools their affections, checks their endeavours after heaven? how shall we answer these questions? alas they are answered by our experience: experience shews how much the men that make profession of the Gospel, and of the hope of life eternal, mind and endeavour other ends, even more than that one needful thing, that chief principal end of all, of attaining to eternal happiness. For these

these men, while they make profession of serving this design only, in the mean time sacrifice to their lusts, sacrifice to their ease and pleasure, sacrifice to their pride and avarice, divide their hearts, and share their endeavours between the present and future things; and do not so heartily seek for heaven, as the Children of this present World seek the advantages of the World.

4. Lastly the Children of this World pursue their ends and interests in it without cessation or interruption: nothing shall divert, nothing interrupt, nothing break off their labours after it. They do not stand to gaze on trifles, to please their eyes, to fill their ears with things, wherein they are not concern'd; but still persist and persevere in steady pursuit of their designs. But they that seem, they that pretend to seek after the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, suffer themselves to be diverted from their course by every little affair, or accident, that interposes in their way. They make a stand at the appearance of the least danger, the smallest difficulty in their way: If they must hazard the smallest part of an estate, or of reputation; if they must deny their
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present ease, if they must forbear their present pleasure in the pursuit of life eternal, all these difficulties must be removed, before they'l adventure to proceed: and if they be not removed at all, here they grow weary of weldoing, here they forsake their former course, so their *latter end is worse than their beginning: for it had been better for them, saith St Peter, not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* And thus you see in how many instances the Children of this present World are wiser than the Children of light. They fix and settle a certain end, they always keep that end in view, they duly consider what are the most effectual means in order to the gaining of it; and having once concluded this, they neither delay the execution, nor suffer any other ends to cool their endeavours in pursuit, or to divert or interrupt them: wherein they shew much more wisdom in their sphere, and in order to their designed end, than they that profess much higher aimes, do to theirs.

And now for reflection upon this discourse, I have something to say to both
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the parties here concern'd, something to the Children of this World, and something to the Children of light.

I. To the Children of this World: and that which I have to say to them, is, to perswade them to change their end, and then to retain the same diligence in their endeavours to attain it, which they formerly used to their former ends.

I. And were not the eyes of mortal men strangely blinded by their lusts, and their ears infinitely dull of hearing; were not their hearts hard and stupid, methinks it should be an easie thing to perswade them to judge eternal glory, everlasting life in the world to come, a greater, a nobler, a higher end, an end more necessary to be sought, than whatsoever they can attain, nay hope, or propound in the present World: will they that pretend to be wise and prudent, and really are so in their sphere, are so in their *Generation*, pretend there is more content, and quiet, more peace, and safety, and satisfaction in the pursuit of wealth, and power, or whatsoever else it be, which they have made their chief end, than in the study of heavenly joys? or, if they will pretend this,

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will they yet pretend that the joys or treasures of this World, are more valuable than these of heaven? or will they pretend that they are equal in themselves? that they are equal in duration? that the creature is as good as God, or time as long as all eternity, a moment equal to infinite ages? If they can so much as pretend this, let them retain their former end, and still make the World their portion: but then if this cannot be pretended, let them change their end, or lose their credit, and forfeit all pretence to wisdom, nay lose their own immortal Souls.

2. But then having once changed their end, let them retain the same diligence, the same prudence in the pursuits and labours for it, which they formerly used to other ends.

You that would not formerly cheat your selves by easie and ineffectual means in order to what you did design, you that would not delay any opportunity, wherein you could possibly serve your selves, you that entirely gave up your hearts, and freely sacrificed all endeavours to serve the end you had propounded, you that would not suffer any lesser things, any charms, or flat-
teries,

teries, or avocations, you that would not suffer your ease and quiet, your rest or sleep, to interrupt you in your course, or to divert you from your ends; be as true and faithful to your selves and to your better resolutions, as you have been to the mean designs, which you had formerly for the World. Having now made a better choice, be not less diligent in endeavour; having now greater ends in view, greater designs upon your minds, think what folly now it were, to be less in diligence than heretofore.

2. And then for you that profess your selves the Children of light, and to have made the Kingdom of God, eternal glory your great end, let me persuade you to persist in all adherence to your end, but to mend your pace, to use more diligence in order to the attaining of it.

1. Your end is such as, that nothing possibly can be greater, nothing more worthy to be chosen: 'tis a *crown of life, a crown of glory, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled reserv'd for you in the heaven*, an inheritance that never fades away.

2. And therefore fix it in your minds,

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live in the constant view of it, chuse the means that are proper for it, put them in speedy execution, lose no time, spare no labour to attain it: Mind your own needful thing, give up your selves entirely to it. Let not the charms, let not the dreads of this present World, let no mans example, no mans frowns, let neither worldly hopes, nor fears divert, or break your resolutions: you have chosen well, pursue your choice against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. Be true to your selves, and God will assist you by his Grace; he will enlighten you by his spirit, he will strengthen you by his power, and tread down Satan under your feet. *And the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.*



The Twentieth Sermon.

Matt. 6. 21.

*For where your treasure is, there will
your heart be also.*

TH F First thing, which every man is concern'd to know, is, where he may find true happiness. For seeing we all desire this, and this desire being the spring of all our Counsels and endeavours, he that hath chosen that for happiness, which God intended so to be, in the very frame of humane nature, hath by this choice put himself into the ready way to gain it: For having made this judgment of it, that this is his chief and supreme good, it will be frequently in his thoughts, it will govern all his deliberate actions, it will be chief in all his designs, he will especially serve this end in every instance of life and action, and never wilfully vary from it.

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This was the reason why our Lord takes care in the words immediately before the Text, to teach us both where we should not, and where we should lay up treasures for our selves. *Lay not up for your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for your selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.* He knew, that where we place our happiness, styled our treasure in these words, there should we also place our hearts. *For saith he, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Upon which words I shall discourse in this method.

1. I shall shew in what manner, and in what degree men set their hearts upon that which they judge their chief good; whether it be the wealth, and honours, the ease, and pleasures of this World, or the Bliss, and Glory of the future.

2. And then secondly I shall consider the several consequences of the words, and draw such conclusions from them, as deserve especial consideration.

1. And

1. And to begin with the former general.

1. The first application of mens souls to that which they judge their supreme good, is a fixt and earnest desire of it.

2. The next to this is a firm design and resolution to apply themselves to the gaining of it.

3. And both these, in the third place, in such degrees, that if ever any competition arise between this end and any other, this is preferred, and still pursued, the other neglected and laid aside.

1. The first application of mens Souls to that they judge their chief good, is a fixt and earnest desire of it; which is so rooted in humane nature, that no man can ever shake it off, wholly extinguish or remove it.

And the truth is, were it not so, that God had planted this desire in the very frame of mans nature, the World would presently fall asleep, the minds of men would drowze and slumber, having nothing to quicken and to awake them: the Soul it self, as busie and active as it is, as full of various thoughts and passions, would be as unactive in the body, as the very body without the Soul. Desire is the principle of all acti-

on, and this desire of being happy, the spring of all our other desires: this moves and quickens all within us, this puts life into all our powers, excites our thoughts, forms our Counsels, lays our designs, stirs up and animates all endeavours: This holds the eye of the mind open, this keeps the Soul it self awake, and puts it into continual motion; for whatsoever it be we do, 'tis done in the view and consideration, of what we believe to be good for us, and some way tending to our happiness; remove this out of the eye of a man, and the clearest reasons that you can urge, will never excite his will to choice, much less engage him unto action. He cannot act, where he cannot hope; nor can he hope where he sees nothing to be desired. Say you whatsoever you can to move him, he will always have this to say for himself, the thing you propound no way tends to any advantage, it doth not serve any end of mine, and therefore why should I undertake it? give me that which will do me good, let me see how it tends unto my welfare, let me know what account I shall find in it; prove that I shall be better for it, either in this, or another World, and then

then you may perswade me to it.

Nor doth this desire of a mans own happiness contradict or prejudice publick welfare; for every wise man understands, that his own particular and private good is always involved in publick welfare: and every good man makes it a part of his own happiness to serve the advantage of other persons; and besides, he knows that he shall be rewarded hereafter for it. And although we cannot all be wise, yet every man may at least be good. But after all, both the good, and evil, wise, and unwise always desire and chuse that, which makes at least the fairest appearance of contributing to their own felicity.

This is the reason why God himself applies himself to this desire in the whole œconomy of his providence, in all his dealings with mankind.

When he prescribes his Laws to us, he urges obedience to these Laws by promising happiness thereunto; which promise yet could have no effect upon us, had we no desire of being happy: on the same account, he threatens misery to the violation of his precepts; which yet would be to little purpose, could we be contented to be miserable,
or

or cease to desire our own felicity.

'Tis the same method which he uses in all his other addresses to us; when he rebukes, when he perswades, when he expostulates and reasons with us, he still accommodates all these things to that desire of being happy, which he hath ingrafted in our natures, as the first mover in all our actions.

Sometimes indeed he applies himself unto the natural desire men have of peace and safety in the world. And so he did to the Jewish Nation, *Deut. 30. 15.* See, saith he, *I have set before thee this day life, and good; death, and evil: and after that at the 9. v. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore chuse life, that is to say, chuse obedience, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

But the great applications made unto us in the Gospel are addressed to that desire in man, which moves him both to desire to be, and to be happy to all eternity. *This is the promise*, saith *S^t John*, *that he hath promised us even eternal life*, 1 John 2. 25. And so *S^t Paul*, *Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9.* where he tell us, that

that God will render to every man according to his deeds to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation; tribulation and wrath, and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

Thus he that made us, and knows our nature, and all the springs of motion in us, in all his applications to us accommodates himself to that desire of being happy, which he himself hath planted in us; as knowing this to be the way to gain a ready compliance from us.

On the same account the great deceiver of mankind paints his baits, covers his snares, gilds his temptations, with an appearance of what is good: He knows it would be a vain thing to attempt to press us unto the choice of what is evil, what is destructive to our selves, should it appear in its own likeness; and therefore he puts a disguise upon it. He boldly told the woman in paradise, that if they would eat what God had forbidden, *their eyes should be opened, they should be as Gods, knowing*
good

good and evil: for if as Gods, then surely wise, and blessed and happy. And thus the temptation found success, which first brought sin into the World, and death, as the wages due unto it

Nor was it a much different method, whereby he applyed himself to Christ, *for he took him, as the Gospel tells us, into an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him all the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down, and worship me, Matt. 4. 8, 9.* Observe what a scene he spreads before him, and how he varnishes and paints it over: he shews him *Kingdoms; glorious things! yea all the Kingdoms of the World: he shews him the glory of these Kingdoms; not the cares, not the solitudes, not the labours, or dangers, that attend them, but only the glory and splendor of them: and then offers them all unto him if he would but do him homage for them.* And though the temptation made no impression upon him, whose Kingdom was not of this World; yet was it craftily laid and aimed, seeing mankind are greatly prone to believe the glory of this World the greatest happiness and felicity; and seeing
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ing also, that the first application of mens Souls, to what they believe so to be, is a fixed and earnest desire of it.

2. The next to this is a firm design and resolution to apply themselves to the gaining of it; from which they cannot be removed if they judge it possible to attain it, and if, in truth, this be the thing, in which alone they place their happiness.

These things allowed, the greatest difficulties, the hardest labours, the sharpest resistance and oppositions, will scarcely discourage resolution, nor hinder endeavours to obtain it.

If it be difficult for mankind to reduce their natural inclinations to a compliance with Christs precepts; to deny inordinate sensualities to sensual appetites and desires; to deny unlawful gains and interests to the desire of wealth and riches; to mortifie pride, to subdue ambition, and all the spawn of these vices, envy, malice, and animosity; to retain piety towards God in a profane and wicked age, truth and justice towards men in a deceitful injurious World: If it be difficult thus to do; yet he that hath firmly fixed these principles in his mind, that this is the only way

way to heaven, and heaven alone the place of happiness, will attempt to make his way thither through these, or any other difficulties, in the view of the glory set before him.

I dare not attempt to describe the reproaches and contradictions, to display the injuries and affronts, that our Lord endured throughout his life, much less the agonies of his death, or his incomparable patience in them. Only thus much I shall observe, that what he had of man in him was still supported, and born up by the stedfast view and consideration of that he had chosen for his happiness: *of that joy that was set before him; for this joy he endured the cross, despising the shame; and so doing, is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God, Heb. 12. 2.*

And what an account of the labours and sufferings of St Paul, is that we read, 2 Cor. 11. 23. and the following verses. *In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep.*
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In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own Countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold, and nakedness, besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches? What an accumulation of things is here! of things most grievous to flesh and blood! heaps upon heaps of all the several troubles, and dangers, which the life of man is exposed unto in the present World. But what impression did these calamities make on him, who had designed eternal happiness? Did he leave the way that leads unto it in consideration of these evils? did he turn his back upon future glory, and quit the further pursuit of it, and retreat to the ease, and peace, and safety, which he had enjoyed, while he was a Pharisee? No, so far was he from so doing, that he reckoned the sufferings of this present World not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, Rom. 8. 18. and doubtless, saith he, I
count

count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung that I may win Christ — that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead, that is to a blessed immortality, *Phil.* 3. 8, 10, 11, 12.

To this he pressed through all the dangers, all the sufferings that did encumber the way unto it: This he believed to be his happiness, and therefore resolved to be true to himself in the unwearied pursuit of it.

And although it may seem to be something strange, that they who employ all their thoughts in the perishing things of the present World, that they who have no design for Heaven, should yet design their own happiness; yet this is the thing which even they design also.

'Tis true indeed they have mistaken in their choice, they have suffered themselves to be abus'd, either by the outward gloss and splendour that shines on the face of wealth, and honour, or by the ease

ease they find, or fanſie in the delights of the preſent World; and ſo they miſtake a meer appearance, a ſhew, a ſhadow of felicity inſtead of the very thing it ſelf. It is a vanity which they follow, but a vanity under a ſhew of happineſs.

What ſo vain as popular fame? the breath of rude, and ignorant people? yet fame is happineſs, ſuch as it is, unto the proud, and ſenſual pleaſures unto the ſenſual, and wealth and riches unto the Covetous; and therefore they who have placed their deſires upon theſe enjoyments, in hope that they ſhall be happy in them, ſpare no labour, reſuſe no troubles to attain them. It is not the diſtance of the thing, wherein they hope for ſatiſfaction, nor the ſliperineſs of the way unto it (though as hard to climb as a rock of Ice) it is not the fear of ſliding back, nor the difficulty of proceeding forward, that can obſtruct the purſuit of it: they will preſs on through the greateſt ſtraits, and labour to climb the higheſt difficulties, if there be hope to attain unto it; and as for thoſe, that cannot hope for any advantage by a ſin, but what they find in the ſin it ſelf, they are ſo degenerate in their natures, that they pleaſe

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them.

themselves in doing evil, and this very pleasure they make their happiness: and so they abandon themselves unto it, although it lead to eternal misery. And so I proceed to the third particular which is,

3. That men do so desire, and so pursue the thing, wherein they place felicity, that if ever a competition arise between that end, and any other; that is preferred, and still pursued, the other neglected, and laid aside.

And certain it is, that although it be true and real happiness, though it be the glory of Heaven it self, which we have propounded to our selves, as the only thing that will make us happy; yet such is the vanity, such the frailty of humane nature, such are the temptations of the World, such is the subtilty and activity of the great deceiver of mankind, that we must expect to find something of competition between this great and excellent end of serving God, and our own happiness, and others of infinitely less importance.

We are compounded of flesh, and spirit; and the flesh lusteth against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh. We are made up of body, and
mind;

mind; and the body will prompt the desire and study of bodily pleasure, and ease, and safety, beyond allowed and lawful measures: sense will oppose it self to reason, nay sense will combat Faith it self; especially where the way to Heaven is beset with the troubles of this World, loss of favour, decay of estate, eclipse of honour and reputation, and where the slipping a little aside will not only serve to give security, but great accession to all the advantages of this life. In this case, sense will paint a hideous representation of all the sufferings and calamities, and give a glorious shew and luster to the advantages of this World, in the imaginations, and minds of men.

Add hereunto that we live in a throng of illexamples; such as may toss us to and fro (like men in the midst of a moving croud) without a vigorous opposition. We are apt to believe, that if the liberties commonly used be not expedient or lawful for us, neither could they be so to other persons; but seeing others plainly believe them so to them, we have reason to judge them so to us. For as all men are of the same mold; so are they under the same Laws: so

that we have no more to lose than others, nor they any less to save than we.

Nor is the Devil a sleep or mindless, how he may divert our course to Heaven: *He walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5.

8. His approaches to us are invisible, his insinuations quick and pressing, and then especially applied and urged, when he finds us ruffled and discomposed by the hopes and fears, and ill impressions that other temptations have made upon us. And thus it sometimes comes to pass, that wise and good, and vertuous persons do by surprise either make a stand, or a false step in the way to Heaven.

But here now is their great advantage, that having formerly fixed upon Heaven, and the glory of it, as their only happiness; having deliberately chosen piety, and sincere obedience to Christs precepts, as the only means of arriving there, this habit of mind, by the grace of God, soon recovers it self again, recollects it self, finds its mistake, rescues it self from the surprize, and returns to God and it self again, just as the needle to the Pole; and fixes, where it was fixed before; and prefers the reward of future glory beyond whatsoever this present world

world can bring into competition with it.

On the contrary, if a man hath chosen the perishing vanities of this World, as things wherein he hopes for happiness; he will pursue, and prefer these, whensoever a competition happens between this World, and that to come: perhaps his conscience may smite him for it, perhaps his reason may for a while make some resistance and opposition, he may possibly find some reluctancies within himself, and waver and fluctuate for sometime between some contrary hopes, and fears; hopes of the end, which he hath propounded, and fear of loss in another state. But if the thing, which he hath designed, be that, wherein he places happiness, his hopes will at length baffle his fears; either remove the consideration, and exclude the thoughts of another World, or else shake the belief of it, or teach him some deceitful arts of reconciling the hopes of Heaven with the enjoyment of his lusts: for what men love and value most, that will have the command of them in every contest and competition.

And this is the reason why our Lord takes such care to give us a true account

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of things; to state their real value to us, to put us in mind, how much the joys and treasures of heaven transcend the treasures that are on earth, seeing moth and rust consume the latter, and that thieves may rob and spoil us of them, while the former are not only durable, not only eternal in themselves, but beyond the reach of theft, and rapine.

Thus doth our Lord adjust and rate the worth of things, that we may learn to chuse aright, to esteem that most, which best deserves to be so esteemed; to judge that best, which is the best: for having judg'd it so to be, we shall fix our hearts and desires upon it, apply our selves to the gaining of it, and that in such degree and manner, that when ever a competition happens between this end, and any other, this will not fail to be preferred in all our deliberate thoughts and actions.

2. Having thus shewed in what manner and what degrees men set their hearts upon their treasure, upon that which they make their chief good; I shall now draw some such conclusions from the words, as deserve our especial consideration.

1. And first of all if the heart will be
where

where the treasure is, we may conclude mens treasure is there, wherever it be that we find their hearts: for these are inseparable each from other.

Whatsoever it is that men prefer in all their deliberate thoughts and counsels, and so pursue in all their actions, that they will rather lose, or hazard all other things, than miss of it, that most undoubtedly is their treasure. If a man will defraud, or oppress his neighbour for the heaping up of wealth and riches, this man hath *mammon* his God, and from this Idol expects felicity. If he will violate truth and justice, reproach, or flatter, or dissemble to, advance himself to power, and honour; these are the things he makes his happiness, and as for those that indulge their sensual inclinations in contradiction to Christs precepts, and the just hopes of a better life, they describe themselves in the 2^d chapter of the Book of Wisdom, v. 5, 6. &c. *Our time, say they, is a very shadow, that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning: for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the Creatures like as in*

youth: Let us fill our selves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us: Let us crown our selves with rose-buds, before they be withered: Let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness: Let us leave tokens of our joyfullness in every place: for this is our portion, and our lot is this. And true it is, whatsoever it is that men pursue with preference unto all other things, that is the thing they make their portion.

And what is the use of this discourse? that men may know, what it is they make their chief Good; and to make it appear how much they often mistake themselves in the choice thereof, when they are little aware of it. Who will believe so ill of himself, as that he values the treasures on earth more than those of Heaven it self? who will believe, he hath chosen wealth or power, or honour, or the perishing pleasures of this life, as his supreme and chief good? and yet if none have so chosen, why do so many so pursue these very things? why so study this present World, as to forget and neglect the other?

Men live by sight and not by Faith:
they

they chuse by sense, and not by reason: and they are surprized into this choice by the early acquaintance which they contract with what is pleasing unto sense, before they imploy their understandings; and when they arrive at the use of them, they make no other use of reason, than for the gaining of that end, which they had formerly chose by sense. Did they use faith, nay reason it self in the choice of the great end of life, they would not chuse, as now they do; Faith would fix upon that glory which God hath promised, although future and invisible: *for faith is the subsistence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Reason would make a reasonable choice, the mind would consult its own advantage. That which is spiritual, and immortal, would chuse immortal and spiritual joys. Reason would never judge it reasonable to be a servant and slave to sense: it would never believe that sensible things would give satisfaction to a spirit, that things uncertain would give a stable and certain happiness: that we can be happy after death by that which will leave us when we die: that we can be blessed in any
enjoy-

enjoyment of shorter duration than our selves, that is, than our immortal souls: from whence it appears, that they who have chosen the perishing things of this world, as the very best and chief enjoyments, (which they have done, who pursue these things with greater care than any other) have neither chosen by Faith, nor reason, and therefore have cause to mend their choice.

2. For secondly, seeing the heart will be where the treasure is, this shews of what importance it is to make a true and a right judgment of what is true and lasting treasure; that is, to chuse that for happiness which is in truth the thing we seek, and will not deceive our expectations.

He that mistakes in this business, fails in the choice of that end, whereby his whole life is governed; which therefore, upon this account, is nothing but one continued error: he thinks indeed that he hath pitched upon an excellent and worthy thing: he fancies great content and pleasure in view of the thing which he hath designed: he imployes and busies all his thoughts, he contrive and orders all his Counsels, bends all his labours to attain it; and though it
cost

cost him many a thought, many a tedious and weary step, yet he makes no doubt, but that it will answer all his hopes, that it will reward him for all his pains, that it will prove worthy of all his cares. He verily believes that he should be happy, if he could but once attain unto it.

Yet so it is, every step he makes towards it, sets him further from true happiness: the further he goes, the further is he out of his way; his back is upon the thing he seeks, and his face on a false appearance of it: It is a vanity; it is a delusion, which he hath chosen, he is under a very sad mistake: and, to use the Prophet *Isaiab's* words, *Isa. 44. 20. A deceived heart hath led him aside, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?*

And well it were, if it were only loss of labour for a man to pursue that as his happiness, which is not really and truly so: but it is infinitely worse than so, it is pernicious, and destructive. For he that chuses a false end, as the scope of all his aims, and labours (as every man doth, who doth not chuse what God commands) is thereby led and hurri-

hurried on to the greatest errors, the greatest evils that offer themselves, if to make it his end he promote and propagate a false means to gain it; if he seek his end in sensuality, no wonder if he debauch himself by riot and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, by making provision for the flesh for the fulfilling the lusts thereof. If he believe, just contrary to our Saviours words, *Luk. 12. 15.* that *a mans* life doth consist in the abundance of the things, which he possesseth, can we wonder if he defraud, or oppress, if he lie, and dissemble to his neighbour, or if he extort out of his hands, that he may more plentifully fill his own? He will not believe he is true to himself, if he be not so to that he hath made the end of life: and therefore that will he still pursue, where ever he spies an opportunity, and finds an advantage to attain it: He will not be startled at oppositions, he will not boggle at any difficulties, he will not spare his own pains, nor the greatest concerns of other persons, he will follow his end where ever it leads, if he can but hope to overtake it: so fatal are the effects and issues of seeking our happiness in those

those things, where our Creator hath not laid it.

On the other hand, to place it there where he hath placed it, is an advantage next to the very fruition of it. He that trusts God, cannot be deceived: he that chuseth that which he hath promised, cannot be cheated or disappointed; the thing will afford what he expects, and infinitely more than what he can imagine: he shall not be flattered with vain hopes, puffed up and swelled for a little while, and then emptied by disappointment, and vexed with the loss of expectation. Time will discover the sad mistakes of other persons; age, infirmities, and experience, or if not these, yet death at least will wear off the gloss of every vanity, of every vain and perishing thing, howsoever it now deludes the fancie, and commends it self to imagination. But time will still more and more justify the choice, strengthen the hopes, and confirm the purposes and resolutions of every wise and good man, and so conduct and lead him on to a blessed eternity: for having deliberately chosen the glory which God hath promised, as the only thing that can make him happy, this will effectually secure
his

his innocence in all deliberate thoughts and actions. If any temptation offer it self, and present an occasion and opportunity to abuse himself, or injure others; if it yield a very fair advantage for secret fraud, or open violence, to revenge himself, or oppress his neighbour; he will always have this to say against it. This is just contrary to my end, this is directly against my self, whatever advantage it seems to offer; it contradicts my main design, it will not consist with my former choice. If I chuse this, I must unravel all I have wrought, I must undo all I have done, I must refuse what I have chosen heretofore, and that by direction from God himself: and this I am resolved I will not do. He that believes that that is his happiness which God hath expressly declared to be so, and that because he hath declared it, will never believe that he can attain it, if he wilfully venture on those evils, which the same God threatens with death eternal.

Nor doth the choice of future glory, as a mans supreme and chief good, secure him only from all the wilful acts of sin, but effectually move and press him on to all diligence in his duty: for he that believes

lieves that that alone is true happiness which God hath promised, will also believe that that diligence, which God hath prescribed is necessary to the attainment of it. And therefore although it be something difficult to raise his natural inclinations to pursue a supernatural end, to awaken his mind out of these flattering dreams and slumbers, which the charms of sense have brought upon it, to keep his thoughts constantly bent upon his end, and excite himself to the greatest labours to attain it; yet he considers that it is his happiness he hath in view, that it is no less than eternal glory which he pursues; that to forsake the pursuit of it, is to forsake his own bliss, and to surrender himself to misery: that it will requite him for all his labours, and cannot be bought at too dear a rate. Thus he makes good our Saviours words, *Matt. 13. 46. The Kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it..*

Add hereunto the great support which the faith and hope of future glory continually offers unto his mind in all the troubles and oppositions, which
may

may beset the way unto it. *We are troubled, saith the Apostle on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, 2 Cor. 4. 7, 8. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. This, saith he, it worketh for us, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things, which are not seen, are eternal.*

And may the serious consideration of that eternal weight of glory, which God hath promised us in the Gospel, teach us to fix our hearts upon it, as the only thing that can ease our labours, quiet our minds, cure our maladies, and remove the burdens of mortality. This is the thing which God himself, who best knows what is good for us, and hath the sincerest love to us, always intended for our happiness: this is the thing, which Christ our Lord came down from Heaven to reveal unto us: this is the thing, which he chose for himself (and sure he knows what is the best for humane nature, being

being God and man in the same person) He lived in the constant view of it, he died to purchase it for his followers; he rose again, he ascended to Heaven, and there abides, not only to enjoy it himself, but to open a way for us unto it, and to prepare a place for us. This is the thing which will supply all our wants, which will remove all imperfections, which will fully satisfy all our desires: It is the fruition of God himself, and will transform us into his image as well in point of immortality, as of wisdom, righteousness, and perfect holiness: *for now are we the sons of God, saith St John, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2. Which blessed vision he of his mercy grant unto us.

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P Ag. 21. lin. 4. dele to. p. 27. l. 19. read *us* such.
p. 35. l. 12. r. *thou* hast. p. 41. l. 5. r. *is* concerned.
p. 58. l. 10. for *want* r. *war*. p. 67. l. 5. for *others* r.
they. p. 71. l. ult. r. *discharge*. p. 72. l. 21. r. *abused*. p. 73.
l. 5. r. *was*. p. 84. l. 20, 21. r. *followers*. p. 96. l. 12. for
pine by r. *let slip*. p. 100. l. 3. r. *undertaken*. p. 125. l. 21.
r. *keep unity*. p. 133. l. 19. r. *known*. p. 144. l. 26. r. *are*
as. p. 149. l. 3. r. *this*. l. 9. r. *the love*. p. 161. l. 20. r. 60.
l. 22. r. *prayed*. p. 176. l. 12. r. *posts*. p. 204. l. 26. r. *pro-*
felytes. p. 206. l. 10. d. *with*. p. 207. l. 22. for *that* r. *it*.
p. 217. l. 13. r. *their*. p. 218. l. 20. r. *were so notoriously*
and grossly so, that. p. 241. l. 18. r. *motives*. p. 245. l.
22. r. *their great*. p. 263. l. 7. d. *eighteenth*. p. 301. l. 27.
r. *discover*. p. 308. l. 17. r. 2 *Thes.* 2. p. 340. l. 12. r. *in*
the fall of the. p. 368. l. 24. r. *in*. p. 381. l. 3. r. *unright-*
eous. p. 410. l. 9. r. *imprudence*. p. 417. l. 15. r. *be be*. p.
424. l. 7. r. *be fit*. p. 432. l. 3, 4. r. *Mind this one*. p. 459.
l. 7. r. *indignation and wrath, tribulation*. p. 476. l. 2, 3,
4. r. *themselves as means to get it: if he make it his end to*
promote and propagate a false; if.

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